

at San Fernando. The good Capuchin, Fray Jose Maria de Malaga, gave us sherry wine, oranges, and tamarinds, to make cooling beverages. We could easily foresee that a roof constructed of palm-tree leaves would become excessively hot on a large river, where we were almost always exposed to the perpendicular rays of the sun. The Indians relied less on the provision we had purchased, than on their hooks and nets. We took also some fire-arms, which we found in general use as far as the cataracts; but farther south the great humidity of the air prevents the missionaries from using them. The Rio Apure abounds in fish, manatis, and turtles, the eggs of which afford an aliment more nutritious than agreeable to the taste. Its banks are inhabited by an innumerable quantity of birds, among which the *pauxi* and the *guacharaca*, which may be called the turkeys and pheasants of those countries, are found to be the most useful. Their flesh appeared to be harder and less white than that of the gallinaceous tribe in Europe, because they use much more muscular exercise. We did not forget to add to our provision, fishing-tackle, fire-arms, and a few casks of brandy, to serve as a medium of barter with the Indians of the Orinoco.

We departed from San Fernando on the 30th of March, at four in the afternoon. The weather was extremely hot; the thermometer rising in the shade to 34°, though the breeze blew very strongly from the south-east. Owing to this contrary wind we could not set our sails. We were accompanied, in the whole of this voyage on the Apure, the Orinoco, and the Rio Negro, by the brother-in-law of the governor of the province of Varinas, Don Nicolas Soto, who had recently arrived from Cadiz. Desirous of visiting countries so calculated to excite the curiosity of a European, he did not hesitate to confine himself with us during seventy-four days in a narrow boat infested with mosquitos. His amiable disposition and gay temper often helped to make us forget the sufferings of a voyage which was not wholly exempt from danger. We passed the mouth of the Apurito, and coasted the island of the same name, formed by the Apure and the Guarico. This island is in fact only a very low spot of ground, bordered by two great rivers; both of which, at a little distance from each other, fall into