

every zone, in America as in Egypt, this animal attains the same size. The species so abundant in the Apure, the Orinoco,* and the Rio de la Magdalena, is not a cayman, but a real crocodile, analagous to that of the Nile, having feet dentated at the external edges. When it is recollected that the male enters the age of puberty only at ten years, and that its length is then eight feet, we may presume that the crocodile measured by M. Bonpland was at least twenty-eight years old. The Indians told us, that at San Fernando scarcely a year passes, without two or three grown-up persons, particularly women who fetch water from the river, being drowned by these carnivorous reptiles. They related to us the history of a young girl of Uritucu, who by singular intrepidity and presence of mind, saved herself from the jaws of a crocodile. When she felt herself seized, she sought the eyes of the animal, and plunged her fingers into them with such violence, that the pain forced the crocodile to let her go, after having bitten off the lower part of her left arm. The girl, notwithstanding the enormous quantity of blood she lost, reached the shore, swimming with the hand that still remained to her. In those desert countries, where man is ever wrestling with nature, discourse daily turns on the best means that may be employed to escape from a tiger, a boa, or a crocodile; every one prepares himself in some sort for the dangers that may await him. "I knew," said the young girl of Uritucu coolly, "that the cayman lets go his hold, if you push your fingers into his eyes." Long after my return to Europe, I learned that in the interior of Africa the negroes know and practise the same means of defence. Who does not recollect, with lively interest, Isaac, the guide of the unfortunate Mungo Park, who was seized twice by a crocodile, and twice escaped from the jaws of the monster, having succeeded in thrusting his fingers into the creature's eyes while under water. The African Isaac, and the young American girl, owed their safety to the same presence of mind, and the same combination of ideas.

The movements of the crocodile of the Apure are sudden and rapid when it attacks any object; but it moves with the slowness of a salamander, when not excited by rage

* It is the *arua* of the Tamanac Indians, the *amana* of the Maypure Indians, the *Crocodilus acutus* of Cuvier.