

monkish legends," said the pulpero of Angostura, in a low voice; for the only travellers in this country being the missionaries, they here call 'monks' stories,' what we call 'travellers' tales,' in Europe.

The Indians assured us that, in going up the Orinoco from its mouth to its junction with the Apure, not one island or one beach is to be found, where eggs can be collected in abundance. The great turtle (*arrau*)\* dreads places inhabited by men, or much frequented by boats. It is a timid and mistrustful animal, raising only its head above the water, and hiding itself at the least noise. The shores where almost all the turtles of the Orinoco appear to assemble annually, are situated between the junction of the Orinoco with the Apure, and the great cataracts; that is to say, between Cabruta and the Mission of Atures. There are found the three famous fisheries; those of Encaramada, or Boca del Cabullare; of Cucuruparu, or Boca de la Tortuga; and of Pararuma, a little below Carichana. It seems that the *arrau* does not pass beyond the cataracts; and we were assured, that only the turtles called *terekay*, (in Spanish *terecayus*,) are found above Atures and Maypures.

The *arrau*, called by the Spaniards of the Missions simply *tortuga*, is an animal whose existence is of great importance to the nations on the Lower Orinoco. It is a large freshwater tortoise, with palmate and membraneous feet; the head very flat, with two fleshy and acutely-pointed appendages under the chin; five claws to the fore feet, and four to the hind feet, which are furrowed underneath. The upper shell has five central, eight lateral, and twenty-four marginal plates. The colour is darkish grey above, and orange beneath. The feet are yellow, and very long. There is a deep furrow between the eyes. The claws are very strong and crooked. The anus is placed at the distance of one-fifth from the extremity of the tail. The full-grown animal weighs from forty to fifty pounds. Its eggs are much larger than those of pigeons, and less elongated than the eggs of the *terekay*. They are covered with a calcareous crust, and, it is

\* This word belongs to the Maypure language, and must not be confounded with *arua*, which means a crocodile, among the Tamanacs, neighbours of the Maypures. The Ottomacs call the turtle of Uruana, *achea*; the Tamanacs, *peje*.