

to a monk of the Orinoco), the small traders of Angostura, who visit the encampments, can give, unfortunately, no very exact information. But in these distant countries no doubt is ever entertained of the news brought by a white man from the capital. The profit of the traders in oil amounts to seventy or eighty per cent.; for the Indians sell it them at the price of a piastre a jar or botija, and the expense of carriage is not more than two-fifths of a piastre per jar. The Indians bring away also a considerable quantity of eggs dried in the sun, or slightly boiled. Our rowers had baskets or little bags of cotton-cloth filled with these eggs. Their taste is not disagreeable, when well preserved. We were shown large shells of turtles, which had been destroyed by the jaguars. These animals follow the *arraus* towards those places on the beach where the eggs are laid. They surprise the *arraus* on the sand; and, in order to devour them at their ease, turn them in such a manner that the under shell is uppermost. In this situation the turtles cannot rise; and as the jaguar turns many more than he can eat in one night, the Indians often avail themselves of his cunning and avidity.

When we reflect on the difficulty experienced by the naturalist in getting out the body of the turtle without separating the upper and under shells, we cannot sufficiently wonder at the suppleness of the tiger's paw, which is able to remove the double armour of the *arrau*, as if the adhering parts of the muscles had been cut by a surgical instrument. The jaguar pursues the turtle into the water when it is not very deep. It even digs up the eggs; and together with the crocodile, the heron, and the galinazo vulture, is the most cruel enemy of the little turtles recently hatched. The island of Pararuma had been so much infested with crocodiles the preceding year, during the egg-harvest, that the Indians in one night caught eighteen, of twelve or fifteen feet long, by means of curved pieces of iron, baited with the flesh of the manati. Besides the beasts of the forests we have just named, the wild Indians also very much diminish the quantity of the oil. Warned by the first slight rains, which they call 'turtle-rains' (*peje canepori*),* they hasten to the banks of the Orinoco, and kill the turtles with poi-

* In the Tamanac language, from *peje*, a tortoise, and *canepo*, rain.