

animals. Scarcely is one male found among several hundred females. The cause of this disparity cannot be the same as with the crocodiles, which fight in the coupling season.

Our pilot had anchored at the *Playa de huevos*, to purchase some provisions, our store having began to run short. We found there fresh meat, Angostura rice, and even biscuit made of wheat-flour. Our Indians filled the boat with little live turtles, and eggs dried in the sun, for their own use. Having taken leave of the missionary of Uruana, who had treated us with great kindness, we set sail about four in the afternoon. The wind was fresh, and blew in squalls. Since we had entered the mountainous part of the country, we had discovered that our canoe carried sail very badly; but the master was desirous of showing the Indians who were assembled on the beach, that, by going close to the wind, he could reach, at one single tack, the middle of the river. At the very moment when he was boasting of his dexterity, and the boldness of his manœuvre, the force of the wind upon the sail became so great that we were on the point of going down. One side of the boat was under water, which rushed in with such violence that it was soon up to our knees. It washed over a little table at which I was writing at the stern of the boat. I had some difficulty to save my journal, and in an instant we saw our books, papers, and dried plants, all afloat. M. Bonpland was lying asleep in the middle of the canoe. Awakened by the entrance of the water and the cries of the Indians, he understood the danger of our situation, whilst he maintained that coolness which he always displayed in the most difficult circumstances. The lee-side righting itself from time to time during the squall, he did not consider the boat as lost. He thought that, were we even forced to abandon it, we might save ourselves by swimming, since there was no crocodile in sight. Amidst this uncertainty the cordage of the sail suddenly gave way. The same gust of wind, that had thrown us on our beam, served also to right us. We laboured to bale the water out of the boat with calabashes, the sail was again set, and in less than half an hour we were in a state to proceed. The wind now abated a little. Squalls alternating with dead calms are common in that part of the Orinoco which