

is bordered by mountains. They are very dangerous for boats deeply laden, and without decks. We had escaped as if by miracle. To the reproaches that were heaped on our pilot for having kept too near the wind, he replied with the phlegmatic coolness peculiar to the Indians, observing "that the whites would find sun enough on those banks to dry their papers." We lost only one book—the first volume of the 'Genera Plantarum' of Schreber—which had fallen overboard. At nightfall we landed on a barren island in the middle of the river, near the Mission of Uruana. We supped in a clear moonlight, seating ourselves on some large turtle-shells that were found scattered about the beach. What satisfaction we felt on finding ourselves thus comfortably landed! We figured to ourselves the situation of a man who had been saved alone from shipwreck, wandering on these desert shores, meeting at every step with other rivers which fall into the Orinoco, and which it is dangerous to pass by swimming, on account of the multitude of crocodiles and caribe fishes. We pictured to ourselves such a man, alive to the most tender affections of the soul, ignorant of the fate of his companions, and thinking more of them than of himself. If we love to indulge such melancholy meditations, it is because, when just escaped from danger, we seem to feel as it were the necessity of strong emotions. Our minds were full of what we had just witnessed. There are periods in life when, without being discouraged, the future appears more uncertain. It was only three days since we had entered the Orinoco, and there yet remained three months for us to navigate rivers encumbered with rocks, and in boats smaller than that in which we had so nearly perished.

The night was intensely hot. We lay upon skins spread on the ground, there being no trees to which we could fasten our hammocks. The torments of the mosquitos increased every day; and we were surprised to find that on this spot our fires did not prevent the approach of the jaguars. They swam across the arm of the river that separated us from the mainland. Towards morning we heard their cries very near. They had come to the island where we passed the night. The Indians told us that, during the collecting of the turtles' eggs, tigers are always more fre-