

it should be remembered that almost all matters of popular belief, even those most absurd in appearance, rest on real facts, but facts ill observed. In treating them with disdain, the traces of a discovery may often be lost, in natural philosophy as well as in zoology. We will not then admit, with a Spanish author, that the fable of the 'man of the woods' was invented by the artifice of Indian women, who pretended to have been carried off, when they had been long absent unknown to their husbands. Travellers who may hereafter visit the missions of the Orinoco will do well to follow up our researches on the *salvaje* or *great devil* of the woods; and examine whether it be some unknown species of bear, or some very rare monkey analogous to the *Simia chiropotes*, or *Simia satanas*, which may have given rise to such singular tales.

After having spent two days near the cataract of Atures, we were not sorry when our boat was reladen, and we were enabled to leave a spot where the temperature of the air is generally by day twenty-nine degrees, and by night twenty-six degrees, of the centigrade thermometer. This temperature seemed to us to be still much more elevated, from the feeling of heat which we experienced. The want of concordance between the instruments and the sensations must be attributed to the continual irritation of the skin excited by the mosquitos. An atmosphere filled with venomous insects always appears to be more heated than it is in reality. We were horribly tormented in the day by mosquitos and the *jejen*, a small venomous fly (*simulium*), and at night by the *zancudos*, a large species of gnat, dreaded even by the natives. Our hands began to swell considerably, and this swelling increased daily till our arrival on the banks of the Temi. The means that are employed to escape from these little plagues are very extraordinary. The good missionary Bernardo Zea, who passed his life tormented by mosquitos, had constructed near the church, on a scaffolding of trunks of palm-trees, a small apartment, in which we breathed more freely. To this we went up in the evening, by means of a ladder, to dry our plants and write our journal. The missionary had justly observed, that the insects abounded more particularly in the lowest strata of the atmosphere, that which reaches from the