

a species of small gnats, called *tempraneros*,* because they appear also at sunrise, take the place of the mosquitos. Their presence scarcely lasts an hour and a half; they disappear between six and seven in the evening, or, as they say here, after the Angelus (a la oracion). After a few minutes' repose, you feel yourself stung by zancudos, another species of gnat with very long legs. The zancudo, the proboscis of which contains a sharp-pointed sucker, causes the most acute pain, and a swelling that remains several weeks. Its hum resembles that of the European gnat, but is louder and more prolonged. The Indians pretend to distinguish the *zancudos* and the *tempraneros* "by their song;" the latter are real twilight insects, while the *zancudos* are most frequently nocturnal insects, and disappear toward sunrise.

In our way from Carthagena to Santa Fé de Bogotá, we observed that between Mompox and Honda, in the valley of the Rio Magdalena, the zancudos darkened the air from eight in the evening till midnight; that towards midnight they diminished in number, and were hidden for three or four hours; and lastly that they returned in crowds, about four in the morning. What is the cause of these alternations of motion and rest? Are these animals fatigued by long flight? It is rare on the Orinoco to see real gnats by day; while at the Rio Magdalena we were stung night and day, except from noon till about two o'clock. The zancudos of the two rivers are no doubt of different species.

We have seen that the insects of the tropics everywhere follow a certain standard in the periods at which they alternately arrive and disappear. At fixed and invariable hours, in the same season, and the same latitude, the air is peopled with new inhabitants, and in a zone where the barometer becomes a clock,* where everything proceeds with such admirable regularity, we might guess blindfold the hour of the day or night, by the hum of the insects, and by their stings,

* 'Which appear at an early hour' (*temprano*). Some persons say, that the *zancudo* is the same as the *tempranero*, which returns at night, after hiding itself for some time. I have doubts of this identity of the species; the pain caused by the sting of the two insects appeared to me different.

† By the extreme regularity of the horary variations of the atmospheric pressure.