

the Indians often invited us to stretch ourselves as they did on ox-skins, near the church, in the middle of the *plaza grande*, where they had assembled all the cows in the neighbourhood. The proximity of cattle gives some repose to man. The Indians of the Upper Orinoco and the Cassiquiare, seeing that M. Bonpland could not prepare his herbal, owing to the continual torment of the mosquitos, invited him to enter their ovens (*hornitos*). Thus they call little chambers, without doors or windows, into which they creep horizontally through a very low opening. When they have driven away the insects by means of a fire of wet brushwood, which emits a great deal of smoke, they close the opening of the oven. The absence of the mosquitos is purchased dearly enough by the excessive heat of the stagnated air, and the smoke of a torch of copal, which lights the oven during your stay in it. M. Bonpland, with courage and patience well worthy of praise, dried hundreds of plants, shut up in these *hornitos* of the Indians.

These precautions of the Indians sufficiently prove that, notwithstanding the different organization of the epidermis, the copper-coloured man, like the white man, suffers from the stings of insects; but the former seems to feel less pain, and the sting is not followed by those swellings which, during several weeks, heighten the irritability of the skin, and throw persons of a delicate constitution into that feverish state which always accompanies eruptive maladies. Whites born in equinoctial America, and Europeans who have long sojourned in the Missions, on the borders of forests and great rivers, suffer much more than the Indians, but infinitely less than Europeans newly arrived. It is not, therefore, as some travellers assert, the thickness of the skin that renders the sting more or less painful at the moment when it is received; nor is it owing to the particular organization of the integuments, that in the Indians the sting is followed by less of swelling and inflammatory symptoms; it is on the nervous irritability of the epidermis that the acuteness and duration of the pain depend. This irritability is augmented by very warm clothing, by the use of alcoholic liquors, by the habit of scratching the wounds, and lastly, (and this physiological observation is the result of my own experience,) that of baths repeated at too short