

lona you may bathe tranquilly in the Rio Neveri amidst these carnivorous reptiles. The jaguars of Maturin, Cumanacoa, and the isthmus of Panama, are timid in comparison of those of the Upper Orinoco. The Indians well know that the monkeys of some valleys are easily tamed, while others of the same species, caught elsewhere, will rather die of hunger than submit to slavery.*

The common people in America have framed systems respecting the salubrity of climates and pathological phenomena, as well as the learned of Europe; and their systems, like ours, are diametrically opposed to each other, according to the provinces into which the New Continent is divided. At the Rio Magdalena the frequency of mosquitos is regarded as troublesome, but salutary. These animals, say the inhabitants, give us slight bleedings, and preserve us, in a country excessively hot, from the scarlet fever, and other inflammatory diseases. But at the Orinoco, the banks of which are very insalubrious, the sick blame the mosquitos for all their sufferings. It is unnecessary to refute the fallacy of the popular belief that the action of the mosquitos is salutary by its local bleedings. In Europe the inhabitants of marshy countries are not ignorant that the insects irritate the epidermis, and stimulate its functions by the venom which they deposit in the wounds they make. Far from diminishing the inflammatory state of the skin, the stings increase it.

The frequency of gnats and mosquitos characterises unhealthy climates only so far as the development and multiplication of these insects depend on the same causes that give rise to miasmata. These noxious animals love a fertile soil covered with plants, stagnant waters, and a humid air never agitated by the wind; they prefer to an open country those shades, that softened day, that tempered degree of

* I might have added the example of the scorpion of Cumana, which it is very difficult to distinguish from that of the island of Trinidad, Jamaica, Carthagena, and Guayaquil; yet the former is not more to be feared than the *Scorpio europæus* (of the south of France), while the latter produces consequences far more alarming than the *Scorpio occitanus* (of Spain and Barbary). At Carthagena and Guayaquil, the sting of the scorpion (alacran) instantly causes the loss of speech. Sometimes a singular torpor of the tongue is observed for fifteen or sixteen hours. The patient, when stung in the legs, stammers as if he had been struck with apoplexy.