

Bataillez, in the road from Carthagena to Honda, while we were dissecting a crocodile eleven feet long, the smell of which infested all the surrounding atmosphere. The Indians much commend the fumes of burnt cow-dung. When the wind is very strong, and accompanied by rain, the mosquitos disappear for some time: they sting most cruelly at the approach of a storm, particularly when the electric explosions are not followed by heavy showers.

Anything waved about the head and the hands contributes to chase away the insects. "The more you stir yourself, the less you will be stung," say the missionaries. The zancudo makes a buzzing before it settles; but, when it has assumed confidence, when it has once begun to fix its sucker, and distend itself, you may touch its wings without its being frightened. It remains the whole time with its two hind legs raised; and, if left to suck to satiety, no swelling takes place, and no pain is left behind. We often repeated this experiment on ourselves in the valley of the Rio Magdalena. It may be asked whether the insect deposits the stimulating liquid only at the moment of its flight, when it is driven away, or whether it draws the liquid up again when left to suck undisturbed. I incline to this latter opinion; for on quietly presenting the back of my hand to the *Culex cyanopterus*, I observed that the pain, though violent in the beginning, diminishes in proportion as the insect continues to suck, and ceases altogether when it voluntarily flies away. I also wounded my skin with a pin, and rubbed the pricks with bruised mosquitos, and no swelling ensued. The irritating liquid, in which chemists have not yet recognized any acid properties, is contained, as in the ant and other hymenopterous insects, in particular glands; and is probably too much diluted, and consequently too much weakened, if the skin be rubbed with the whole of the bruised insect.

I have thrown together at the close of this chapter all we learned during the course of our travels on phenomena which naturalists have hitherto singularly neglected, though they exercise a great influence on the welfare of the inhabitants, the salubrity of the climate, and the establishment of new colonies on the rivers of equinoctial America. I might justly have incurred the charge of having treated