

mavacure is a mortal poison only when it is concentrated by fire; and ebullition deprives the juice of the root of *Jatropha manihot* (the manioc) of all its baneful qualities. In rubbing a long time between my fingers the liana which yields the potent poison of La Peca, when the weather was excessively hot, my hands were benumbed; and a person who was employed with me felt the same effects from this rapid absorption by the uninjured integuments.

I shall not here enter into any detail on the physiological properties of those poisons of the New World which kill with the same promptitude as the strychnæ of Asia,* but without producing vomiting when they are received into the stomach, and without denoting the approach of death by the violent excitement of the spinal marrow. Scarcely a fowl is eaten on the banks of the Orinoco which has not been killed with a poisoned arrow; and the missionaries allege that the flesh of animals is never so good as when this method is employed. Father Zea, who accompanied us, though ill of a tertian fever, every morning had the live fowls allotted for our food brought to his hammock together with an arrow, and he killed them himself; for he would not confide this operation, to which he attached great importance, to any other person. Large birds, a guan (pava de monte) for instance, or a curassao (alector), when wounded in the thigh, die in two or three minutes; but it is often ten or twelve minutes before life is extinct in a pig or a peccary. M. Bonpland found that the same poison, bought in different villages, varied much. We had procured at the river Amazon some real Ticuna poison which was less potent than any of the varieties of the *curare* of the Orinoco. Travellers, on arriving in the missions, frequently testify their apprehension on learning that the fowls, monkeys, guanans, and even the fish which they eat, have been killed with poisoned arrows. But these fears are groundless. Majendie has proved by his ingenious experiments on transfusion, that the blood of animals on which the bitter strychnos of India has produced a deleterious effect, has no fatal action on other animals. A dog received a considerable quantity of poisoned blood into his veins without any trace of irritation being perceived in the spinal marrow.

* The nux vomica, the upps tieute, and the bean of St. Ignatius. (Strychnos Iguatia.)