

with this salt, which is also taken internally. I had myself no direct and sufficiently convincing proof of the action of this specific; and the experiments of Delille and Majendie rather tend to disprove its efficacy. On the banks of the Amazon, the preference among the antidotes is given to sugar; and muriate of soda being a substance almost unknown to the Indians of the forests, it is probable that the honey of bees, and that farinaceous sugar which oozes from plantains dried in the sun, were anciently employed throughout Guiana. In vain have ammonia and eau-de-luce been tried against the *curare*; it is now known that these specifics are uncertain, even when applied to wounds caused by the bite of serpents. Sir Everard Home has shown that a cure is often attributed to a remedy, when it is owing only to the slowness of the wound, and to a very circumscribed action of the poison. Animals may with impunity be wounded with poisoned arrows, if the wound be well laid open, and the point imbued with poison be withdrawn immediately after the wound is made. If salt or sugar be employed in these cases, people are tempted to regard them as excellent specifics. Indians, who had been wounded in battle by weapons dipped in the *curare*, described to us the symptoms they experienced, which were entirely similar to those observed in the bite of serpents. The wounded person feels congestion in the head, vertigo, and nausea. He is tormented by a raging thirst, and numbness pervades all the parts that are near the wound.

The old Indian, who was called the poison-master, seemed flattered by the interest we took in his chemical processes. He found us sufficiently intelligent to lead him to the belief that we knew how to make soap, an art which, next to the preparation of *curare*, appeared to him one of the finest of human inventions. When the liquid poison had been poured into the vessels prepared for their reception, we

entered into combination with the blood there is no remedy, either for man or any of the inferior animals. The *wourali* and other poisons mentioned by Humboldt have, since the publication of this work, been carefully analysed by the first chemists of Europe, and experiments made on their symptoms and supposed remedies. Artificial inflation of the lungs was found the most successful, but in very few instances was any cure effected.]