

name of odoriferous earths (*tierras olorosas*), have an odour agreeable to women.\* Brown relates, in his *History of Jamaica*, that the crocodiles of South America swallow small stones and pieces of very hard wood, when the lakes which they inhabit are dry, or when they are in want of food. M. Bonpland and I observed in a crocodile, eleven feet long, which we dissected at Batallez, on the banks of the Rio Magdalena, that the stomach of this reptile contained half-digested fish, and rounded fragments of granite three or four inches in diameter. It is difficult to admit that the crocodiles swallow these stony masses accidentally, for they do not catch fish with their lower jaw resting on the ground at the bottom of the river. The Indians have framed the absurd hypothesis that these indolent animals like to augment their weight, that they may have less trouble in diving. I rather think that they load their stomach with large pebbles, to excite an abundant secretion of the gastric juice. The experiments of Majendie render this explanation extremely probable. With respect to the habit of the granivorous birds, particularly the gallinaceæ and ostriches, of swallowing sand and small pebbles, it has been hitherto attributed to an instinctive desire of accelerating the trituration of the aliments in a muscular and thick stomach.

We have mentioned, that tribes of Negroes on the Gambia mingle clay with their rice. Some families of Ottomacs were perhaps formerly accustomed to cause the maize and other farinaceous seeds to *rot* in their *poya*, in order to eat earth and amylaceous matter together: possibly it was a preparation of this kind, that Father Gumilla described indistinctly in the first volume of his work, when he affirms, "that the Guamos and the Ottomacs feed upon earth only because it is impregnated with the *sustancia del maiz*, (substance of maize) and the fat of the cayman." I have already observed that neither the present missionary of Uruana, nor Fray Juan Gonzales, who lived long in those countries, knew anything of this mixture of animal and vegetable substances

\* *Bucaro* (vas fictile odoriferum). People are fond of drinking out of these vessels on account of the smell of the clay. The women of the province of Alentejo acquire a habit of masticating the *bucaro* earth; and feel a great privation when they cannot indulge this vitiated taste.