

intervals. In places where the absence of crocodiles permits people to enter a river, M. Bonpland and myself observed that the immoderate use of baths, while it moderated the pain of old stings of zancudos, rendered us more sensible to new stings. By bathing more than twice a day, the skin is brought into a state of nervous irritability, of which no idea can be formed in Europe. It would seem as if all feeling were carried toward the integuments.

As the mosquitos and gnats pass two-thirds of their lives in the water, it is not surprising that these noxious insects become less numerous in proportion as you recede from the banks of the great rivers which intersect the forests. They seem to prefer the spots where their metamorphosis took place, and where they go to deposit their eggs. In fact the wild Indians (Indios monteros) experience the greater difficulty in accustoming themselves to the life of the missions, as they suffer in the Christian establishments a torment which they scarcely know in their own inland dwellings. The natives at Maypures, Atures, and Esmeralda, have been seen fleeing to the woods, or, as they say, *al monte*, solely from the dread of mosquitos. Unfortunately, all the Missions of the Orinoco have been established too near the banks of the river. At Esmeralda the inhabitants assured us that if the village were situated in one of the five plains surrounding the high mountains of Duida and Maraguaca, they should breathe freely, and enjoy some repose. The great cloud of mosquitos (*la nube de moscas*) to use the expression of the monks, is suspended only over the Orinoco and its tributary streams, and is dissipated in proportion as you remove from the rivers. We should form a very inaccurate idea of Guiana and Brazil, were we to judge of that great forest four hundred leagues wide, lying between the sources of the Madeira and the Lower Orinoco, from the vallies of the rivers by which it is crossed.

I learned that the little insects of the family of the *nemocera* migrate from time to time like the *alouate* monkeys, which live in society. In certain spots, at the commencement of the rainy season, different species appear, the sting of which has not yet been felt. We were informed at the Rio Magdalena, that at Simiti no other *culex* than the *jejen* was formerly known; and it was then possible to enjoy a