

of its prey. The animal, overcome by pain, plunged to the bottom of the river, and, after having drowned the Indian, came up to the surface of the water, dragging the dead body to an island opposite the port. A great number of the inhabitants of Angostura witnessed this melancholy spectacle.

The crocodile, owing to the structure of its larynx, of the hyoïdal bone, and of the folds of its tongue, can seize, though not swallow, its prey under water; thus when a man disappears, the animal is usually perceived some hours after devouring its prey on a neighbouring beach. The number of individuals who perish annually, the victims of their own imprudence and of the ferocity of these reptiles, is much greater than is believed in Europe. It is particularly so in villages where the neighbouring grounds are often inundated. The same crocodiles remain long in the same places. They become from year to year more daring, especially, as the Indians assert, if they have once tasted of human flesh. These animals are so wary, that they are killed with difficulty. A ball does not pierce their skin; and the shot is only mortal when it penetrates the throat or a part beneath the shoulder. The Indians, who know little of the use of fire-arms, attack the crocodile with lances, after the animal has been caught with large pointed iron hooks, baited with pieces of meat, and fastened by a chain to the trunk of a tree. They do not approach the animal till it has struggled a long time to disengage itself from the iron fixed in the upper jaw. There is little probability that a country, in which a labyrinth of rivers without number brings every day new bands of crocodiles from the eastern back of the Andes, by the Meta and the Apure, toward the coast of Spanish Guiana, should ever be delivered from these reptiles. All that will be gained by civilization will be, to render them more timid and more easily put to flight.

Affecting instances are related of African slaves, who have exposed their lives to save those of their masters, who had fallen into the jaws of a crocodile. A few years ago, between Uritucu and the Mission de Abaxo, a negro, hearing the cries of his master, flew to the spot, armed with a long knife (machete), and plunged into the river. He forced the crocodile, by putting out his eyes, to let go his prey and to