

by a symmetrical mesh-work; so that the net, instead of being, as is generally the case, circular, consisted of a wedge-shaped segment. All the webs were similarly constructed.

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### CHAPTER III

Monte Video—Maldonado—Excursion to R. Polanco—Lazo and Bolas—Partridges—Absence of Trees—Deer—Capybara, or River Hog—Tucutuco—Molothrus, cuckoo-like habits—Tyrant flycatcher—Mocking-bird—Carrion Hawks—Tubes formed by Lightning—House struck

#### MALDONADO

JULY 5, 1832.—In the morning we got under way, and stood out of the splendid harbor of Rio de Janeiro. In our passage to the Plata we saw nothing particular, excepting on one day a great shoal of porpoises, many hundreds in number. The whole sea was in places furrowed by them; and a most extraordinary spectacle was presented, as hundreds, proceeding together by jumps, in which their whole bodies were exposed, thus cut the water. When the ship was running nine knots an hour, these animals could cross and recross the bows with the greatest ease, and then dash away right ahead. As soon as we entered the estuary of the Plata, the weather was very unsettled. One dark night we were surrounded by numerous seals and penguins, which made such strange noises that the officer on watch reported he could hear the cattle bellowing on shore. On a second night we witnessed a splendid scene of natural fireworks; the mast-head and yardarm ends shone with St. Elmo's light; and the form of the vane could almost be traced, as if it had been rubbed with phosphorus. The sea was so highly luminous that the tracks of the penguins were marked by a fiery wake, and the darkness of the sky was momentarily illuminated by the most vivid lightning.

When within the mouth of the river, I was interested by