

to the outward action of their hind legs; and they are quite incapable, from the socket of the thigh-bone not having a certain ligament, of jumping even the smallest vertical height. They are very stupid in making any attempt to escape; when angry or frightened they uttered the tucu-tuco. Of those I kept alive several, even the first day, became quite tame, not attempting to bite or to run away; others were a little wilder.

The man who caught them asserted that very many are invariably found blind. A specimen which I preserved in spirits was in this state; Mr. Reid considers it to be the effect of inflammation in the nictitating membrane. When the animal was alive I placed my finger within half an inch of its head, and not the slightest notice was taken: it made its way, however, about the room nearly as well as the others. Considering the strictly subterranean habits of the tucutuco, the blindness, though so common, cannot be a very serious evil; yet it appears strange that any animal should possess an organ frequently subject to be injured. Lamarck would have been 'delighted with this fact, had he known it, when speculating' (probably with more truth than usual with him) on the gradually-acquired blindness of the *Aspalax*, a Gnawer living underground, and of the *Proteus*, a reptile living in dark caverns filled with water; in both of which animals the eye is in an almost rudimentary state, and is covered by a tendinous membrane and skin. In the common mole the eye is extraordinarily small but perfect, though many anatomists doubt whether it is connected with the true optic nerve; its vision must certainly be imperfect, though probably useful to the animal when it leaves its burrow. In the tucutuco, which I believe never comes to the surface of the ground, the eye is rather larger, but often rendered blind and useless, though without apparently causing any inconvenience to the animal: no doubt Lamarck would have said that the tucutuco is now passing into the state of the *Aspalax* and *Proteus*.

¹ Philosoph. Zoölog., tom. i. p. 242.