

1832, a very rainy season followed, which caused great floods. Hence it is almost certain that some thousands of the skeletons were buried by the deposits of the very next year. What would be the opinion of a geologist viewing such an enormous collection of bones, of all kinds of animals and of all ages, thus imbedded in one thick earthy mass? Would he not attribute it to a flood having swept over the surface of the land rather than to the common order of things? ¹

October 12th.—I had intended to push my excursion further, but, not being quite well, I was compelled to return by a balandra, or one-masted vessel of about a hundred tons' burden, which was bound to Buenos Ayres. As the weather was not fair, we moored early in the day to a branch of a tree on one of the islands. The Parana is full of islands, which undergo a constant round of decay and renovation. In the memory of the master several large ones had disappeared, and others again had been formed and protected by vegetation. They are composed of muddy sand, without even the smallest pebble, and were then about four feet above the level of the river; but during the periodical floods they are inundated. They all present one character; numerous willows and a few other trees are bound together by a great variety of creeping plants, thus forming a thick jungle. These thickets afford a retreat for capybaras and jaguars. The fear of the latter animal quite destroyed all pleasure in scrambling through the woods. This evening I had not proceeded a hundred yards before, finding indubitable signs of the recent presence of the tiger, I was obliged to come back. On every island there were tracks; and as on the former excursion "el rastro de los Indios" had been the subject of conversation, so in this was "el rastro del tigre."

The wooded banks of the great rivers appear to be the favorite haunts of the jaguar; but south of the Plata I was told that they frequented the reeds bordering lakes: where-

¹ These droughts to a certain degree seem to be almost periodical; I was told the dates of several others, and the intervals were about fifteen years.