

legs and exerted claws it scrapes the leg of a chair; and I have heard of young fruit-trees in an orchard in England having been thus much injured. Some such habit must also be common to the puma, for on the bare hard soil of Patagonia I have frequently seen scores so deep that no other animal could have made them. The object of this practice is, I believe, to tear off the ragged points of their claws, and not, as the Gauchos think, to sharpen them. The jaguar is killed, without much difficulty, by the aid of dogs baying and driving him up a tree, where he is despatched with bullets.

Owing to bad weather we remained two days at our moorings. Our only amusement was catching fish for our dinner: there were several kinds, and all good eating. A fish called the "armado" (a *Silurus*) is remarkable from a harsh grating noise which it makes when caught by hook and line, and which can be distinctly heard when the fish is beneath the water. This same fish has the power of firmly catching hold of any object, such as the blade of an oar or the fishing-line, with the strong spine both of its pectoral and dorsal fin. In the evening the weather was quite tropical, the thermometer standing at 79°. Numbers of fireflies were hovering about, and the mosquitoes were very troublesome. I exposed my hand for five minutes, and it was soon black with them; I do not suppose there could have been less than fifty, all busy sucking.

October 15th.—We got under way and passed Punta Gorda, where there is a colony of tame Indians from the province of Misiones. We sailed rapidly down the current, but before sunset, from a silly fear of bad weather, we brought to in a narrow arm of the river. I took the boat and rowed some distance up this creek. It was very narrow, winding, and deep; on each side a wall thirty or forty feet high, formed by trees entwined with creepers, gave to the canal a singularly gloomy appearance. I here saw a very extraordinary bird, called the Scissor-beak (*Rhynchops nigra*). It has short legs, web feet, extremely long-pointed wings, and is of about the size of a tern. The beak is flattened laterally;