

describe are before our eyes bears a character of truth and individuality which gives attraction to things the least important.

On the 31st March a contrary wind obliged us to remain on shore till noon. We saw a part of some cane-fields laid waste by the effect of a conflagration which had spread from a neighbouring forest. The wandering Indians everywhere set fire to the forest where they have encamped at night; and during the season of drought, vast provinces would be the prey of these conflagrations if the extreme hardness of the wood did not prevent the trees from being entirely consumed. We found trunks of *desmanthus* and mahogany which were scarcely charred two inches deep.

Having passed the Diamante we entered a land inhabited only by tigers, crocodiles, and chiguires; the latter are a large species of the genus *Cavia* of Linnæus. We saw flocks of birds, crowded so closely together as to appear against the sky like a dark cloud which every instant changed its form. The river widens by degrees. One of its banks is generally barren and sandy from the effect of inundations; the other is higher, and covered with lofty trees. In some parts the river is bordered by forests on each side, and forms a straight canal a hundred and fifty toises broad. The manner in which the trees are disposed is very remarkable. We first find bushes of *sauzo*,\* forming a kind of hedge four feet high, and appearing as if they had been clipped by the hand of man. A copse of cedar, *brazillette*, and *lignum-vitæ*, rises behind this hedge. Palm-trees are rare; we saw only a few scattered trunks of the thorny *piritu* and *corozo*. The large quadrupeds of those regions, the jaguars, tapirs, and peccaries, have made openings in the hedge of *sauzo* which we have just described. Through these the wild animals pass when they come to drink at the river. As they fear but little the approach of a boat, we had the pleasure of viewing them as they paced slowly along the shore till they disappeared in the forest, which they entered by one of the narrow passes left at intervals between the bushes. These scenes, which were often repeated, had ever for me a peculiar attraction. The pleasure

\* *Hermesia castaneifolia*. This is a new genus, approaching the *alchornea* of Swartz.