

by a singular mixture of boldness and timidity. They advanced within the distance of two feet from the animal, but at the least movement he made they drew back. In order to observe more nearly the manners of these creatures, we went into the little skiff that accompanied our canoe. Tigers very rarely attack boats by swimming to them; and never but when their ferocity is heightened by a long privation of food. The noise of our oars led the animal to rise slowly, and hide itself behind the *sauzo* bushes that bordered the shore. The vultures tried to profit by this moment of absence to devour the chiguire; but the tiger, notwithstanding the proximity of our boat, leaped into the midst of them, and in a fit of rage, expressed by his gait and the movement of his tail, carried off his prey to the forest. The Indians regretted that they were not provided with their lances, in order to go on shore and attack the tiger. They are accustomed to this weapon, and were right in not trusting to our fire-arms. In so excessively damp an atmosphere muskets often miss fire.

Continuing to descend the river, we met with the great herd of chiguire which the tiger had put to flight, and from which he had selected his prey. These animals saw us land very unconcernedly; some of them were seated, and gazed upon us, moving the upper lip like rabbits. They seemed not to be afraid of man, but the sight of our dog put them to flight. Their hind legs being longer than their fore legs, their pace is a slight gallop, but with so little swiftness that we succeeded in catching two of them. The chiguire, which swims with the greatest agility, utters a short moan in running, as if its respiration were impeded. It is the largest of the family of rodentia or gnawing animals. It defends itself only at the last extremity, when it is surrounded and wounded. Having great strength in its grinding teeth,* particularly the hinder ones, which are pretty long, it can tear the paw of a tiger, or the leg of a horse, with its bite.

* We counted eighteen on each side. On the hind feet, at the upper end of the metatarsus, there is a callosity three inches long and three quarters of an inch broad, destitute of hair. The animal, when seated, rests upon this part. No tail is visible externally; but on putting aside the hair we discover a tubercle, a mass of naked and wrinkled flesh, of a conical figure, and half an inch long.