

Its flesh has a musky smell somewhat disagreeable; yet hams are made of it in this country, a circumstance which almost justifies the name of 'water-hog,' given to the chiguire by some of the older naturalists. The missionary monks do not hesitate to eat these hams during Lent. According to their zoological classification they place the armadillo, the thick-nosed taper, and the manati, near the tortoises; the first, because it is covered with a hard armour like a sort of shell; and the others because they are amphibious. The chiguire is found in such numbers on the banks of the rivers Santo Domingo, Apure, and Arauca, in the marshes and in the inundated savannahs* of the Llanos, that the pasturages suffer from them. They browse the grass which fattens the horses best, and which bears the name of *chiguirero*, or chiguire-grass. They feed also upon fish; and we saw with surprise, that, when scared by the approach of a boat, the animal in diving remains eight or ten minutes under water.

We passed the night as usual, in the open air, though in a plantation, the proprietor of which employed himself in hunting tigers. He wore scarcely any clothing, and was of a dark brown complexion like a Zambo. This did not prevent his classing himself amongst the Whites. He called his wife and his daughter, who were as naked as himself, Doña Isabella and Doña Manuela. Without having ever quitted the banks of the Apure, he took a lively interest in the news of Madrid,—enquiring eagerly respecting "those never-ending wars, and everything down yonder (*todas las cosas de alla*).” He knew, he said, that the king was soon to come and visit "the grandees of the country of Caracas," but he added with some pleasantry, "as the people of the court can eat only wheaten bread, they will never pass beyond the town of Victoria, and we shall not see them here." I had brought with me a chiguire, which I had intended to have roasted; but our host assured us, that such 'Indian game' was not food fit for "*nos otros caballeros blancos*," (white gentlemen like ourselves and him). Accordingly he offered us some venison, which he had killed the day before with an arrow, for he had neither powder nor fire-arms.

* Near Uritucu, in the Caño del Ravanal, we saw a flock of eighty or one hundred of these animals.