

the sun, and lying in such a manner as to have their tails, which were furnished with broad plates, resting on one another. Some little herons,\* white as snow, walked along their backs, and even upon their heads, as if passing over trunks of trees. The crocodiles were of a greenish grey, half covered with dried mud; from their colour and immobility they might have been taken for statues of bronze. This excursion had nearly proved fatal to me. I had kept my eyes constantly turned towards the river; but, whilst picking up some spangles of mica agglomerated together in the sand, I discovered the recent footsteps of a tiger, easily distinguishable from their form and size. The animal had gone towards the forest, and turning my eyes on that side, I found myself within eighty paces of a jaguar that was lying under the thick foliage of a ceiba. No tiger had ever appeared to me so large.

There are accidents in life against which we may seek in vain to fortify our reason. I was extremely alarmed, yet sufficiently master of myself and of my motions to enable me to follow the advice which the Indians had so often given us as to how we ought to act in such cases. I continued to walk on without running, avoided moving my arms, and I thought I observed that the jaguar's attention was fixed on a herd of capybaras which was crossing the river. I then began to return, making a large circuit toward the edge of the water. As the distance increased, I thought I might accelerate my pace. How often was I tempted to look back in order to assure myself that I was not pursued! Happily I yielded very tardily to this desire. The jaguar had remained motionless. These enormous cats with spotted robes are so well fed in countries abounding in capybaras, pecaries, and deer, that they rarely attack men. I arrived at the boat out of breath, and related my adventure to the Indians. They appeared very little interested by my story; yet, after having loaded our guns, they accompanied us to the ceiba

\* Garzon chico. It is believed, in Upper Egypt, that herons have an affection for crocodiles, because they take advantage in fishing of the terror that monstrous animal causes among the fishes, which he drives from the bottom to the surface of the water; but on the banks of the Nile, the heron keeps prudently at some distance from the crocodile.