

of its beak, to swallow its food by throwing it up into the air. It raises it indeed with some difficulty from the ground, but, having once seized it with the point of its enormous beak, it has only to lift it up by throwing back its head, and holding it perpendicularly whilst in the act of swallowing. This bird makes extraordinary gestures when preparing to drink. The monks say that it makes the sign of the cross upon the water; and this popular belief has obtained for the toucan, from the creoles, the singular name of *diostede*.*

Most of our animals were confined in small wicker cages; others ran at full liberty in all parts of the boat. At the approach of rain the macaws sent forth noisy cries, the toucan wanted to reach the shore to fish, and the little monkeys (the titis) went in search of Father Zea, to take shelter in the large sleeves of his Franciscan habit. These incidents sometimes amused us so much that we forgot the torment of the mosquitos. At night we placed a leather case (*petaca*), containing our provisions, in the centre; then our instruments, and the cages of our animals; our hammocks were suspended around the cages, and beyond were those of the Indians. The exterior circle was formed by the fires which are lighted to keep off the jaguars. Such was the order of our encampment on the banks of the Cassiquiare. The Indians often spoke to us of a little nocturnal animal, with a long nose, which surprises the young parrots in their nests, and in eating makes use of its hands like the monkeys and the maniveris, or kinkajous. They call it the *guachi*; it is, no doubt, a coati, perhaps the *Viverra nasua*, which I saw wild in Mexico. The missionaries gravely prohibit the natives from eating the flesh of the *guachi*, to which, according to far-spread superstitious ideas, they attribute the same stimulating qualities which the people of the East believe to exist in the skink, and the Americans in the flesh of the alligator.

On the 11th of May, we left the mission of San Francisco Solano at a late hour, to make but a short day's journey. The uniform stratum of vapours began to be divided into clouds with distinct outlines: and there was a

* *Dios te dè*, God gives it thee.