

morals of their parishioners, or to conceal the monastic system from the indiscreet curiosity of strangers, often adhere with rigour to an old regulation, by which a white man of the secular state is not permitted to sojourn more than one night in an Indian village. The Missions form (I will not say according to their primitive and canonical institutions, but in reality) a distinct and nearly independent hierarchy, the views of which seldom accord with those of the secular clergy.

The missionary of San Fernando was a Capuchin, a native of Aragon, far advanced in years, but strong and healthy. His extreme corpulency, his hilarity, the interest he took in battles and sieges, ill accorded with the ideas we form in northern countries of the melancholy reveries and the contemplative life of missionaries. Though extremely busy about a cow which was to be killed next day, the old monk received us with kindness, and permitted us to hang up our hammocks in a gallery of his house. Seated, without doing anything, the greater part of the day, in an arm-chair of red wood, he bitterly complained of what he called the indolence and ignorance of his countrymen. Our missionary, however, seemed well satisfied with his situation. He treated the Indians with mildness; he beheld his Mission prosper, and he praised with enthusiasm the waters, the bananas, and the dairy-produce of the district. The sight of our instruments, our books, and our dried plants, drew from him a sarcastic smile; and he acknowledged, with the naïveté peculiar to the inhabitants of those countries, that of all the enjoyments of life, without excepting sleep, none was comparable to the pleasure of eating good beef (*carne de vaca*): thus does sensuality obtain an ascendancy, where there is no occupation for the mind.

The mission of San Fernando was founded about the end of the 17th century, near the junction of the small rivers of the Manzanares and Lucas Perez. A fire, which consumed the church and the huts of the Indians, induced the Capuchins to build the village in its present fine situation. The number of families is increased to one hundred, and the missionary observed to us, that the custom of marrying at thirteen or fourteen years of age contributes greatly to this rapid increase of population. He denied that old age was