

so premature among the Chaymas, as is commonly believed in Europe. The government of these Indian parishes is very complicated; they have their governor, their major-alguazils, and their militia-commanders, all copper-coloured natives. The company of archers have their colours, and perform their exercise with the bow and arrow, in shooting at a mark; this is the national guard (militia) of the country. This military establishment, under a purely monastic system, seemed to us very singular.

On the night of the 5th of September, and the following morning, there was a thick fog; yet we were not more than a hundred toises above the level of the sea. I determined geometrically, at the moment of our departure, the height of the great calcareous mountain which rises at 800 toises distance to the south of San Fernando, and forms a perpendicular cliff on the north side. It is only 215 toises higher than the great square; but naked masses of rock, which here exhibit themselves in the midst of a thick vegetation, give it a very majestic aspect.

The road from San Fernando to Cumana passes amidst small plantations, through an open and humid valley. We forded a number of rivulets. In the shade the thermometer did not rise above 30°: but we were exposed to the direct rays of the sun, because the bamboos, which skirted the road, afforded but small shelter, and we suffered greatly from the heat. We passed through the village of Arenas, inhabited by Indians, of the same race as those at San Fernando. But Arenas is no longer a mission; and the natives, governed by a regular priest,* are better clothed, and more civilized. Their church is also distinguished in the country by some rude paintings which adorn its walls. A narrow border encloses figures of armadilloes, caymans, jaguars, and other animals peculiar to the new world.

In this village lives a labourer, Francisco Lozano, who presented a highly curious physiological phenomenon. This man has suckled a child with his own milk. The mother having fallen sick, the father, to quiet the infant, took it into his bed, and pressed it to his bosom. Lozano, then thirty-two years of age, had never before remarked that he

* The four villages of Arenas, Macarapana, Mariguitar, and Aricagua, founded by Aragonese Capuchins, are called *Doctrinas de Encomienda*.