

pared with the excessive heat of the plains of Cumana, we might call it the temperature of spring. Water exposed to currents of air in vessels of porous clay, cools at Caripe, during the night, as low as  $13^{\circ}$ .

Experience has proved that the temperate climate and rarefied air of this spot are singularly favourable to the cultivation of the coffee-tree, which is well known to flourish on heights. The prefect of the capuchins, an active and enlightened man, has introduced into the province this new branch of agricultural industry. Indigo was formerly planted at Caripe, but the small quantity of fecula yielded by this plant, which requires great heat, caused the culture to be abandoned. We found in the *conuco* of the community many culinary plants, maize, sugar cane, and five thousand coffee-trees, which promised a fine harvest. The friars were in hopes of tripling the number in a few years. We cannot help remarking the uniform efforts for the cultivation of the soil which are manifested in the policy of the monastic hierarchy. Wherever convents have not yet acquired wealth in the New Continent, as formerly in Gaul, in Syria, and in the north of Europe, they exercise a happy influence on the clearing of the ground and the introduction of exotic vegetation. At Caripe, the *conuco* of the community presents the appearance of an extensive and beautiful garden. The natives are obliged to work in it every morning from six to ten, and the alcaldes and alguazils of Indian race overlook their labours. These men are looked upon as great state functionaries, and they alone have the right of carrying a cane. The selection of them depends on the superior of the convent. The pedantic and silent gravity of the Indian alcaldes, their cold and mysterious air, their love of appearing in form at church and in the assemblies of the people, force a smile from Europeans. We were not yet accustomed to these shades of the Indian character, which we found the same at the Orinoco, in Mexico, and in Peru, among people totally different in their manners and their language. The alcaldes came daily to the convent, less to treat with the monks on the affairs of the Mission, than under the pretence of inquiring after the health of the newly-arrived travellers. As we gave them brandy, their visits became more frequent than the monks desired.