

the torrid zone, hunting tribes are not numerous, and in the Missions, the men work in the fields as well as the women.

Nothing can exceed the difficulty experienced by the Indians in learning Spanish, to which language they have an absolute aversion. Whilst living separate from the whites, they have no ambition to be called educated Indians, or, to borrow the phrase employed in the Missions, 'latinized Indians' (*Indios muy latinos*). Not only among the Chaymas, but in all the very remote Missions which I afterwards visited, I observed that the Indians experience vast difficulty in arranging and expressing the most simple ideas in Spanish, even when they perfectly understand the meaning of the words and the turn of the phrases. When a European questions them concerning objects which have surrounded them from their cradles, they seem to manifest an imbecility exceeding that of infancy. The missionaries assert that this embarrassment is neither the effect of timidity nor of natural stupidity, but that it arises from the impediments they meet with in the structure of a language so different from their native tongue. In proportion as man is remote from cultivation, the greater is his mental inaptitude. It is not, therefore, surprising that the isolated Indians in the Missions should experience in the acquisition of the Spanish language, less facility than Indians who live among mestizoes, mulattoes, and whites, in the neighbourhood of towns. Nevertheless, I have often wondered at the volubility with which, at Caripe, the native *alcalde*, the *governador*, and the *sergento mayor*, will harangue for whole hours the Indians assembled before the church; regulating the labours of the week, reprimanding the idle, or threatening the disobedient. Those chiefs who are also of the Chayma race, and who transmit the orders of the missionary, speak all together in a loud voice, with marked emphasis, but almost without action. Their features remain motionless; but their look is imperious and severe.

These same men, who manifest quickness of intellect, and who were tolerably well acquainted with the Spanish, were unable to connect their ideas, when, in our excursions in the country around the convent, we put questions to them through the intervention of the monks. They were made to