

spontaneously, and in great abundance, near Maypures; and in going up the Orinoco, beyond the mouth of the Guaviare, from Santa Barbara to the lofty mountain of Duida, particularly near Esmeralda. We also found it on the banks of the Cassiquiare. The red pigment of *chica* is not obtained from the fruit, like the *onoto*, but from the leaves macerated in water. The colouring matter separates in the form of a light powder. It is collected, without being mixed with turtle-oil, into little lumps eight or nine inches long, and from two to three high, rounded at the edges. These lumps, when heated, emit an agreeable smell of benzoin. When the *chica* is subjected to distillation, it yields no sensible traces of ammonia. It is not, like indigo, a substance combined with azote. It dissolves slightly in sulphuric and muriatic acids, and even in alkalis. Ground with oil, the *chica* furnishes a red colour that has a tint of lake. Applied to wool, it might be confounded with madder-red. There is no doubt but that the *chica*, unknown in Europe before our travels, may be employed usefully in the arts. The nations on the Orinoco, by whom this pigment is best prepared, are the Salivas, the Guipuñaves,\* the Caveres, and the Piraos. The processes of infusion and maceration are in general very common among all the nations on the Orinoco. Thus the Maypures carry on a trade of barter with the little loaves of *puruma*, which is a vegetable fecula, dried in the manner of indigo, and yielding a very permanent yellow colour. The chemistry of the savage is reduced to the preparation of pigments, that of poisons, and the dulcification of the amylaceous roots, which the aroides and the euphorbiaceous plants afford.

Most of the missionaries of the Upper and Lower Orinoco permit the Indians of their Missions to paint their skins. It is painful to add, that some of them speculate on this barbarous practice of the natives. In their huts, pompously called *conventos*,† I have often seen stores of *chica*, which they sold as high as four francs the cake. To form a just idea of the extravagance of the decoration of these naked Indians, I must observe, that a man of large

\* Or Guaypuñaves; they call themselves *Uipuñavi*.

† In the Missions, the priest's house bears the name of 'the convent.'