

stature gains with difficulty enough by the labour of a fortnight, to procure in exchange the *chica* necessary to paint himself red. Thus as we say, in temperate climates, of a poor man, "he has not enough to clothe himself," you hear the Indians of the Orinoco say, "that man is so poor, that he has not enough to paint half his body." The little trade in *chica* is carried on chiefly with the tribes of the Lower Orinoco, whose country does not produce the plant which furnishes this much-valued substance. The Caribs and the Ottomacs paint only the head and the hair with *chica*, but the Salives possess this pigment in sufficient abundance to cover their whole bodies. When the missionaries send on their own account small cargoes of cacao, tobacco, and *chiquichiqui** from the Rio Negro to Angostura, they always add some cakes of *chica*, as being articles of merchandise in great request.

The custom of painting is not equally ancient among all the tribes of the Orinoco. It has increased since the time when the powerful nation of the Caribs made frequent incursions into those countries. The victors and the vanquished were alike naked; and to please the conqueror it was necessary to paint like him, and to assume his colour. The influence of the Caribs has now ceased, and they remain circumscribed between the rivers Carony, Cuyuni, and Paraguamuzi; but the Caribbean fashion of painting the whole body is still preserved. The custom has survived the conquest.

Does the use of the anato and *chica* derive its origin from the desire of pleasing, and the taste for ornament, so common among the most savage nations? or must we suppose it to be founded on the observation, that these colouring and oily matters with which the skin is plastered, preserve it from the sting of the mosquitos? I have often heard this question discussed in Europe; but in the Missions of the Orinoco, and wherever, within the tropics, the air is filled with venomous insects, the inquiry would appear absurd. The Carib and the Salive, who are painted red, are not less cruelly tormented by the mosquitos and the zancudos, than the Indians whose bodies are plastered with no colour. The sting of the insect causes

* Ropes made with the petioles of a palm-tree with pinnate leaves.