

women belonging to nations of which the manners are not much depraved, to that rude state of slavery to which the sex is reduced in South America by male injustice and tyranny?

When we speak in Europe of a native of Guiana, we figure to ourselves a man whose head and waist are decorated with the fine feathers of the macaw, the toucan, and the humming-bird. Our painters and sculptors have long since regarded these ornaments as the characteristic marks of an American. We were surprised at not finding in the Chayma Missions, in the encampments of Uruana and of Pararuma (I might almost say on all the shores of the Orinoco and the Cassiquiare) those fine plumes, those feathered aprons, which are so often brought by travellers from Cayenne and Demerara. These tribes for the most part, even those whose intellectual faculties are most expanded, who cultivate alimentary plants, and know how to weave cotton, are altogether as naked,* as poor, and as destitute of ornaments as the natives of New Holland. The excessive heat of the air, the profuse perspiration in which the body is bathed at every hour of the day and a great part of the night, render the use of clothes insupportable. Their objects of ornament, and particularly their plumes of feathers, are reserved for dances and solemn festivals. The plumes worn by the Guipuñaves† are the most celebrated; being composed of the fine feathers of manakins and parrots.

The Indians are not always satisfied with one colour uniformly spread; they sometimes imitate, in the most whimsical manner, in painting their skin, the form of European garments. We saw some at Pararuma, who were painted with blue jackets and black buttons. The missionaries related to us that the Guaynaves of the Rio Caura are accustomed to stain themselves red with anato, and to make broad transverse stripes on the body, on which they stick spangles of silvery mica. Seen at a distance, these

* For instance, the Macos and the Piraoas. The Caribs must be excepted, whose *perizoma* is a cotton cloth, so broad that it might cover the shoulders.

† These came originally from the banks of the Inirida, one of the rivers that fall into the Guaviare.