

exceedingly black; and the hoarse sounds of the cascades of the Orinoco mingled with the rolling of the distant thunder.

Early in the morning of the 13th April we passed the rapids of Tabaje, and again disembarked. Father Zea, who accompanied us, desired to perform mass in the new Mission of San Borja, established two years before. We there found six houses inhabited by uncatechised Guahibos. They differ in nothing from the wild Indians. Their eyes, which are large and black, have more vivacity than those of the Indians who inhabit the ancient missions. We in vain offered them brandy; they would not even taste it. The faces of all the young girls were marked with round black spots; like the patches by which the ladies of Europe formerly imagined they set off the whiteness of their skins. The bodies of the Guahibos were not painted. Several of them had beards, of which they seemed proud; and, taking us by the chin, showed us by signs, that they were made like us. Their shape was in general slender. I was again struck, as I had been among the Salives and the Macos, with the little uniformity of features to be found among the Indians of the Orinoco. Their look is sad and gloomy; but neither stern nor ferocious. Without having any notion of the practices of the Christian religion, they behaved with the utmost decency at church. The Indians love to exhibit themselves; and will submit temporarily to any restraint or subjection, provided they are sure of drawing attention. At the moment of the consecration, they made signs to one another, to indicate beforehand that the priest was going to raise the chalice to his lips. With the exception of this gesture, they remained motionless and in imperturbable apathy.

The interest with which we examined these poor savages became perhaps the cause of the destruction of the mission. Some among them, who preferred a wandering life to the labours of agriculture, persuaded the rest to return to the plains of the Meta. They told them, "that the white men would come back to San Borja, to take them away in the boats, and sell them as *poitos*, or slaves, at Angostura." The Guahibos awaited the news of our return from the Rio Negro by the Cassiquiare; and when they heard that we were arrived at the first great cataract, that of Atures, they all deserted, and fled to the savannahs that border the