

building, not excepting the foundations of the pyramids erected by the French savans for the measurement of the meridian, is regarded as *Inga pilca*,* that is, the work of the Inca; so on the Orinoco every hidden treasure can belong only to the Jesuits, an order which, no doubt, governed the missions better than the Capuchins and the monks of the Observance, but whose riches and success in the civilization of the Indians have been much exaggerated. When the Jesuits of Santa Fé were arrested, those heaps of piastres, those emeralds of Muzo, those bars of gold of Choco, which the enemies of the company supposed they possessed, were not found in their dwellings. I can cite a respectable testimony, which proves incontestibly, that the viceroy of New Granada had not warned the Jesuits of Santa Fé of the danger with which they were menaced. Don Vicente Orosco, an engineer officer in the Spanish army, related to me that, being arrived at Angostura, with Don Manuel Centurion, to arrest the missionaries of Carichana, he met an Indian boat that was going down the Rio Meta. The boat being manned with Indians who could speak none of the tongues of the country, gave rise to suspicions. After useless researches, a bottle was at length discovered, containing a letter, in which the Superior of the company residing at Santa Fé informed the missionaries of the Orinoco of the persecutions to which the Jesuits were exposed in New Grenada. This letter recommended no measure of precaution; it was short, without ambiguity, and respectful towards the government, whose orders were executed with useless and unreasonable severity.

Eight Indians of Atures had conducted our boat through the *raudales*, and seemed well satisfied with the slight recompence we gave them. They gain little by this employment; and in order to give a just idea of the poverty and want of commerce in the missions of the Orinoco, I shall observe that during three years, with the exception of the boats sent annually to Angostura by the commander of San Carlos du Rio Negro, to fetch the pay of the soldiers, the missionary had seen but five canoes of the Upper

* *Pilca* (properly in Quichua *pirca*), wall of the Inca.