

zone, on the banks of the Missouri, as well as on the table-land of New Mexico, the American is a hunter; but in the torrid zone, in the forests of Guiana, he cultivates cassava, plantains, and sometimes maize. Such is the admirable fertility of nature, that the field of the native is a little spot of land, to clear which requires only setting fire to the brambles; and putting a few seeds or slips into the ground is all the husbandry it demands. If we go back in thought to the most remote ages, in these thick forests we must always figure to ourselves nations deriving the greater part of their nourishment from the earth; but, as this earth produces abundance in a small space, and almost without toil, we may also imagine these nations often changing their dwellings along the banks of the same river. Even now the native of the Orinoco travels with his seeds; and transports his farm (conuco) as the Arab transports his tent, and changes his pasturage. The number of cultivated plants found wild amid the woods, proves the nomad habits of an agricultural people. Can we be surprised, that by these habits they lose almost all the advantages that result in the temperate zone from stationary culture, from the growth of corn, which requires extensive lands and the most assiduous labour?

The nations of the Upper Orinoco, the Atabapo, and the Inirida, like the ancient Germans and the Persians, have no other worship than that of the powers of nature. They call the good principle *Cachimana*; it is the *Manitou*, the Great Spirit, that regulates the seasons, and favours the harvests. Along with *Cachimana* there is an evil principle, *Iolokiamo*, less powerful, but more artful, and in particular more active. The Indians of the forest, when they occasionally visit the missions, conceive with difficulty the idea of a temple or an image. "These good people," said the missionary, "like only processions in the open air. When I last celebrated the festival of San Antonio, the patron of my village, the Indians of Inirida were present at mass. 'Your God,' said they to me, 'keeps himself shut up in a house, as if he were old and infirm; ours is in the forest, in the fields, and on the mountains of Sipapu, whence the rains come.'" Among the more numerous, and on this account less barbarous tribes, religious societies of a singular kind