

the festivity. The oldest and most timid of the Indians, however, imbued all the rest with a superstitious dread; all resolved to flee *al monte*, and the missionary adjourned his project of turning into derision the demon of the natives. What extravagant ideas may sometimes enter the imagination of an idle monk, who passes his life in the forests, far from everything that can recall human civilization to his mind. The violence with which the attempt was made to execute in public at Tomo the mysterious dance of the devils is the more strange, as all the books written by the missionaries relate the efforts they have used to prevent the *funereal dances*, the *dances of the sacred trumpet*, and that ancient *dance of serpents*, the *Queti*, in which these wily animals are represented as issuing from the forests, and coming to drink with the men in order to deceive them, and carry off the women.

After two hours' navigation from the mouth of the Tomo we arrived at the little mission of San Miguel de Davipe, founded in 1775, not by monks, but by a lieutenant of militia, Don Francisco Bobadilla. The missionary of the place, Father Morillo, with whom we spent some hours, received us with great hospitality. He even offered us Madeira wine, but, as an object of luxury, we should have preferred wheaten bread. The want of bread becomes more sensibly felt in length of time than that of a strong liquor. The Portuguese of the Amazon carry small quantities of Madeira wine, from time to time, to the Rio Negro; and the word *madera* signifying *wood* in the Castilian language, the monks, who are not much versed in the study of geography, had a scruple of celebrating mass with Madeira wine, which they took for a fermented liquor extracted from the trunk of some tree, like palm-wine; and requested the guardian of the missions to decide, whether the *vino de madera* were wine from grapes, or the juice of a tree. At the beginning of the conquest, the question was agitated, whether it were allowable for the priests, in celebrating mass, to use any fermented liquor analogous to grape-wine. The question, as might have been foreseen, was decided in the negative.

At Davipe we bought some provisions, among which were fowls and a pig. This purchase greatly interested our Indians, who had been a long while deprived of meat. They