

killed him, and hid the body behind a copse of thick trees, near Esmeralda. This crime, like many others among the Indians, would have remained unknown, if the murderer had not made preparations for a feast on the following day. He tried to induce his children, born in the mission and become Christians, to go with him for some parts of the dead body. They had much difficulty in persuading him to desist from his purpose; and the soldier who was posted at Esmeralda, learned from the domestic squabble caused by this event, what the Indians would have concealed from his knowledge.

It is known that cannibalism and the practice of human sacrifices, with which it is often connected, are found to exist in all parts of the globe, and among people of very different races;* but what strikes us more in the study of history is to see human sacrifices retained in a state of civilization somewhat advanced; and that the nations who hold it a point of honour to devour their prisoners are not always the rudest and most ferocious. The painful facts have not escaped the observation of those missionaries who are sufficiently enlightened to reflect on the manners of the surrounding tribes. The Cabres, the Guipañaves, and the Caribs, have always been more powerful and more civilized than the other hordes of the Orinoco; and yet the two former are as much addicted to anthropophagy as the latter are repugnant to it. We must carefully distinguish the different branches into which the great family of the Caribbee nations is divided. These branches are as numerous as those of the Mongols, and the western Tartars, or Turcomans. The Caribs of the continent, those who inhabit the plains between the Lower Orinoco, the Rio Branco, the Essequibo, and the sources of the Oyapoc, hold in horror the practice of devouring their enemies. This barbarous custom,† at the first discovery of America,

* Some casual instances of children carried off by the negroes in the island of Cuba have led to the belief, in the Spanish colonies, that there are tribes of cannibals in Africa. This opinion, though supported by some travellers, is not borne out by the researches of Mr. Barrow on the interior of that country. Superstitious practices may have given rise to imputations perhaps as unjust as those of which Jewish families were the victims in the ages of intolerance and persecution.

† See Geraldini Itinerarium, p. 186, and the eloquent tract of cardinal Bembo on the discoveries of Columbus. "*Insularum partem homines*