

and laborious; but suffer them to take part in an incursion (entrada) to bring in the natives, and you can scarcely prevent them from murdering all they meet, and hiding some portions of the dead bodies." In reflecting on the manners of these Indians, we are almost horrified at that combination of sentiments which seem to exclude each other; that faculty of nations to become but partially humanized; that preponderance of customs, prejudices, and traditions, over the natural affections of the heart. We had a fugitive Indian from the Guaisia in our canoe, who had become sufficiently civilized in a few weeks to be useful to us in placing the instruments necessary for our observations at night. He was no less mild than intelligent, and we had some desire of taking him into our service. What was our horror when, talking to him by means of an interpreter, we learned, "that the flesh of the marimonde monkeys, though blacker, appeared to him to have the taste of human flesh." He told us "that his relations (that is, the people of his tribe) preferred the inside of the hands in man, as in bears." This assertion was accompanied with gestures of savage gratification. We inquired of this young man, so calm and so affectionate in the little services which he rendered us, whether he still felt sometimes a desire to eat of a Cheruvichahena. He answered, without discomposure, that, living in the mission, he would only eat what he saw was eaten by the Padres. Reproaches addressed to the natives on the abominable practice which we here discuss, produce no effect; it is as if a Brahmin, travelling in Europe, were to reproach us with the habit of feeding on the flesh of animals. In the eyes of the Indian of the Guaisia, the Cheruvichahena was a being entirely different from himself; and one whom he thought it was no more unjust to kill than the jaguars of the forest. It was merely from a sense of propriety that, whilst he remained in the mission, he would only eat the same food as the Fathers. The natives, if they return to their tribe (al monte), or find themselves pressed by hunger, soon resume their old habits of anthropophagy. And why should we be so much astonished at this inconstancy in the tribes of the Orinoco, when we are reminded, by terrible and well-ascertained examples, of what has passed among civilized nations in