

to a place of proscription. This great distance of the coast from the scene of this revolution led the monks to hope that their crime would remain long unknown beyond the Great Cataracts. They wished to gain time to intrigue, to negotiate, to frame acts of accusation, and employ the little artifices by which, in every country, the invalidity of a first election may be proved. Fray Gutierrez de Aguilera languished in his prison at Esmeralda, and fell dangerously ill from the double influence of the excessive heat, and the continual irritation of the mosquitos. Happily for the fallen power the monks did not remain united. A missionary of the Cassiquiare conceived serious alarms respecting the issue of this affair; he dreaded being sent a prisoner to Cadiz, or, as they say in the colonies, having his name on the list (*baxo partido de registro*). Fear overcame his resolution, and he suddenly disappeared. Indians were placed on the watch at the mouth of the Atabapo, at the Great Cataracts, and wherever the fugitive was likely to pass on his way to the Lower Orinoco. Notwithstanding these precautions, he arrived at Angostura, and then reached the college of the missions of Piritu; denounced his colleagues; and was appointed, in recompense of this information, to arrest those with whom he had conspired against the president of the missions.* At Esmeralda, where the political events that have agitated Europe for thirty years past have not yet been heard of, lively interest is still felt in an event which is called "the sedition of the monks," (*el alboroto de los frailes*.) In this country, as in the East, no conception is formed of any other revolutions than those that are made by rulers themselves; and we have just seen that the effects are not very alarming.

If the *villa* of Esmeralda, with a population of twelve or fifteen families, be at present considered as a frightful place of abode, this must be attributed to the want of cultivation, the distance from every other inhabited country, and the exces-

* Two of the missionaries, considered as the leaders of the insurrection, were embarked at Angostura, in order to be tried in Spain. The vessel in which they were conveyed became leaky, and put into Spanish Harbour in the island of Trinidad. The governor Chacon interested himself in the fate of the monks; they were pardoned a violent proceeding somewhat inconsistent with monastic discipline, and were again employed in the missions. I was acquainted with them both during my abode in South America.