

them in the sun, and reduce them to powder without separating the bones. I have seen masses of fifty or sixty pounds of this flour, which resembles that of cassava. When it is wanted for eating, it is mixed with water, and reduced to a paste. In every climate the abundance of fish has led to the invention of the same means of preserving them. Pliny and Diodorus Siculus have described the *fish-bread* of the ichthyophagous nations, that dwelt on the Persian Gulf and the shores of the Red Sea.*

At Esmeralda, as everywhere else throughout the missions, the Indians who will not be baptized, and who are merely aggregated in the community, live in a state of polygamy. The number of wives differs much in different tribes. It is most considerable among the Caribs, and all the nations that have preserved the custom of carrying off young girls from the neighbouring tribes. How can we imagine domestic happiness in so unequal an association? The women live in a sort of slavery, as they do in most nations which are in a state of barbarism. The husbands being in the full enjoyment of absolute power, no complaint is heard in their presence. An apparent tranquillity prevails in the household; the women are eager to anticipate the wishes of an imperious and sullen master; and they attend without distinction to their own children and those of their rivals. The missionaries assert, what may easily be believed, that this domestic peace, the effect of fear, is singularly disturbed when the husband is long absent. The wife who contracted the first ties then applies to the others the names of concubines and servants. The quarrels continue till the return of the master, who knows how to calm their passions by the sound of his voice, by a mere gesticulation, or, if he thinks it necessary, by means a little more violent. A certain inequality in the rights of the women is sanctioned by the language of the Tamanacs. The husband calls the second and third wife the companions of the first; and the first treats these companions as rivals and enemies (*ipucjatoje*),

* These nations, in a still ruder state than the natives of the Orinoco, contented themselves with drying the raw fish in the sun. They made up the fish-paste in the form of bricks, and sometimes mixed with it the aromatic seed of *paliurus* (*rhamnus*), as in Germany, and some other countries, cummin and fennel-seed are mixed with wheaten bread.