

A very well informed traveller, M. Giesecke, who resided six years in Greenland, assured me that the dogs of the Esquimaux, which pass their lives in the open air, and bury themselves in winter beneath the snow, do not bark, but howl like wolves.\*

The practice of eating the flesh of dogs is now entirely unknown on the banks of the Orinoco; but as it is a Tartar custom, spread through all the eastern part of Asia, it appears to me highly interesting for the history of nations to have ascertained that it existed heretofore in the hot regions of Guiana and on the table-lands of Mexico. I must observe, also, that on the confines of the province of Durango, at the northern extremity of New Spain, the Comanches have preserved the habit of loading the backs of the great dogs that accompany them in their migrations, with their tents of buffalo-leather. It is well known that employing dogs as beasts of burthen and of draught is equally common near the Slave Lake and in Siberia. I dwell on these features of conformity in the manners of nations, which become of some weight when they are not solitary, and are connected with the analogies furnished by the structure of languages, the division of time, and religious creeds and institutions.

We passed the night at the island of Cucuruparu, called also *Playa de la Tortuga*, because the Indians of Uruana go thither to collect the turtles' eggs. It is one of the best determined points of latitude along the banks of the Orinoco. I was there fortunate enough to observe the passage of three stars over the meridian. To the east of the island is the mouth of the Caño de la Tortuga, which descends from the mountains of Cerbatana, continually wrapped in electric clouds. On the southern bank of the Caño, between the tributary streams Parapara and Oche,

occur in the history of mute dogs, and dogs destitute of hair, the "Views of Nature," Bohn's edition, p. 85.

\* They sit down in a circle; one of them begins to howl alone, and the others follow in the same tone. The groups of alouate monkeys howl in the same manner, and among them the Indians distinguish "the leader of the band." It was the practice at Mexico to castrate the mute dogs, in order to fatten them. This operation must have contributed to alter the organ of the voice.