

climate, within the torrid zone, embarrassed the natives in regard to migration in numerous bodies, prevented settlements requiring an extensive space, and perpetuated the misery and barbarism of solitary hordes.

The feeble civilization introduced in our days by the Spanish monks pursues a retrograde course. Father Gili relates that, at the time of the expedition to the boundaries, agriculture began to make some progress on the banks of the Orinoco; and that cattle, especially goats, had multiplied considerably at Maypures. We found no goats, either in the mission or in any other village of the Orinoco; they had all been devoured by the tigers. The black and white breeds of pigs only, the latter of which are called French pigs (*puercos franceses*), because they are believed to have come from the Caribbee Islands, have resisted the pursuit of wild beasts. We saw with much pleasure *guacamayas*, or tame macaws, round the huts of the Indians, and flying to the fields like our pigeons. This bird is the largest and most majestic species of parrot with naked cheeks that we found in our travels. It is called in Maratitan, *cahuei*. Including the tail, it is two feet three inches long. We had observed it also on the banks of the Atabapo, the Temi, and the Rio Negro. The flesh of the *cahuei*, which is frequently eaten, is black and somewhat tough. These macaws, whose plumage glows with vivid tints of purple, blue, and yellow, are a great ornament to the Indian farm-yards; they do not yield in beauty to the peacock, the golden pheasant, the pauxi, or the alector. The practice of rearing parrots, birds of a family so different from the gallinaceous tribes, was remarked by Columbus. When he discovered America he saw macaws, or large parrots, which served as food to the natives of the Caribbee Islands, instead of fowls.

A majestic tree, more than sixty feet high, which the planters call *fruta de burro*, grows in the vicinity of the little village of Maypures. It is a new species of the unona, and has the stateliness of the *Uvaria zeylanica* of Aublet. Its branches are straight, and rise in a pyramid, nearly like the poplar of the Mississippi, erroneously called the Lombardy poplar. The tree is celebrated for its aromatic fruit, the infusion of which is a powerful febrifuge.