

influence over the neighbouring nations. As he attended us in all our herborizations, we obtained from his own mouth information so much the more useful, as the missionaries have great confidence in his veracity. He assured us, that in his youth he had seen almost all the Indian tribes, that inhabit the vast regions between the Upper Orinoco, the Rio Negro, the Inirida, and the Jupura, eat human flesh. The Daricavanas, the Puchirinavis, and the Manitivitanos, appeared to him to be the greatest cannibals among them. He believes that this abominable practice is with them the effect of a system of vengeance; they eat only enemies who are made prisoners in battle. The instances where, by a refinement of cruelty, the Indian eats his nearest relations, his wife, or an unfaithful mistress, are extremely rare. The strange custom of the Scythians and Massagetes, the Capanaguas of the Rio Ucayale, and the ancient inhabitants of the West Indian Islands, of honouring the dead by eating a part of their remains, is unknown on the banks of the Orinoco. In both continents this trait of manners belongs only to nations that hold in horror the flesh of a prisoner. The Indian of Hayti (Saint Domingo) would think himself wanting in regard to the memory of a relation, if he did not throw into his drink a small portion of the body of the deceased, after having dried it like one of the mummies of the Guanches, and reduced it to powder. This gives us just occasion to repeat with an eastern poet, "of all animals man is the most fantastic in his manners, and the most disorderly in his propensities."

The climate of the mission of San Antonio de Javita is extremely rainy. When you have passed the latitude of three degrees north, and approach the equator, you have seldom an opportunity of observing the sun or the stars. It rains almost the whole year, and the sky is constantly cloudy. As the breeze is not felt in these immense forests of Guiana, and the reflux polar currents do not penetrate them, the column of air which reposes on this wooded zone is not renewed by dryer strata. It is saturated with vapours which are condensed into equatorial rains. The missionary assured us that it often rains here four or five months without cessation.

The temperature of Javita is cooler than that of Maypures,