

DOBRIZHOFFER MARTIN

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
ABIPONES, AN  
EQUESTRIAN PEOPLE  
OF PARAGUAY, (2 OF  
3)**

Martin Dobrizhoffer

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# Martin Dobrizhoffer

## An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay, (2 of 3)

### CHAPTER I. OF THE TERRITORY, ORIGIN, AND VARIOUS NAMES OF THE ABIPONES

The Abipones inhabit the province Chaco, the centre of all Paraguay; they have no fixed abodes, nor any boundaries, except what fear of their neighbours has established. They roam extensively in every direction, whenever the opportunity of attacking their enemies, or the necessity of avoiding them renders a journey advisable. The northern shore of the Rio Grande or Bermejo, which the Indians call Iñatè, was their native land in the last century. Thence they removed, to avoid the war carried on against Chaco by the Spaniards of Salta, at the commencement of this century, and migrating towards the south, took possession of a valley formerly held by the Calchaquis. This territory, which is about two hundred leagues in extent, they at present occupy. But from what region their ancestors came there is no room for conjecture. Ychamenraikin, chief cacique of the Abipones in the town of St. Jeronymo, told us, that, after crossing the vast waters, they were carried hither on an ass, and this he declared he had heard from ancient men. I have often thought that the Americans originally came, step by step, from the most northern parts of Europe, which are perhaps joined to America, or separated only by a narrow firth. We have observed some resemblance in the manners and customs of the Abipones to the Laplanders, and people of Nova Zembla, and we always noticed in these savages a magnetical propensity to the north, as if they inclined towards their native soil; for when irritated by any untoward event, they cried in a threatening tone —*Mahaik quer ereëgem*, I will go to the north; though this threat meant that they would return to the northern parts of Paraguay, where their savage compatriots live at this day, free from the yoke of the Spaniards, and from Christian discipline.

But if the Americans sprung from the north of Europe, why are all the Indians of both Americas destitute of beard, in which the northern Europeans abound? Do not ascribe that to air, climate, and country, for though we see some plants brought from Europe to America degenerate in a short time, yet we find that Spaniards, Portugueze, Germans, and Frenchmen, who in Europe are endowed with plenty of beard, never lose it in any part of America, but that their children and grandchildren plainly testify their European origin by their beard. If you see any Indian with a middling-sized beard, you may be sure that his father or grandfather was an European; for those thinly-scattered hairs, growing here and there upon the chins of the Indians both of North and South America, are unworthy the name of beard.

Paraguay is indeed near Africa, yet who would say that the inhabitants migrated from thence? In that case, the Paraguayrians would be of a black, or at any rate of a dusky leaden colour, like the Africans. The English, Spaniards, and Portugueze know that if both parents be Negroes, the children, in whatever country they are born, will be black, but that the offspring of a male and female Indian are of a whitish colour, which somewhat darkens as they grow older, from the heat of the sun, and the smoke of the fire, which they keep alive, day and night, in their huts. Moreover, the Americans have not woolly hair like the Negroes, but straight, though very black locks. The vast extent of ocean which divides Africa from the southern parts of America, renders a passage difficult, and almost incredible, at a time when navigators, then unfurnished with the magnet, dared scarcely sail out of sight of the

shore. The Africans, you will say, might have been cast by a storm on the shores of America; but how could the wild beasts have got there? Opposite to the shores of Paraguay lies the Cape of Good Hope, inhabited by Hottentots which, in the savageness of their manners, resemble the Paraguayan Indians, but are totally different in the form of their bodies, in their customs, and language. Many may, with more justice, contend that Asia was the original country of the Americans, it being connected with America by some hitherto undiscovered tie; and so they may, with my free leave; nor, were I to hear it affirmed that the Americans fell from the moon, should I offer any refutation, but having experienced the inconstancy, volubility, and changefulness of the Indians, should freely coincide in that opinion. The infinite variety of tongues amongst the innumerable nations of America baffles all conjecture in regard to their origin. You cannot discover the faintest trace of any European, African, or Asiatic language amongst them all.

However, although I dare not affirm positively whence the Abipones formerly came, I will at any rate tell you where they now inhabit. That vast extent of country bounded from north to south by the Rio Grande, or Iñatè and the territories of Sta. Fè, and from east to west by the shores of the Paraguay, and the country of St. Iago, is the residence of the Abipones, who are distributed into various hordes. Impatient of agriculture and a fixed home, they are continually moving from place to place. The opportunity of water and provisions at one time, and the necessity of avoiding the approach of the enemy at another, obliges them to be constantly on the move. The Abipones imitate skilful chess-players. After committing slaughter in the southern colonies of the Spaniards, they retire far northwards, afflict the city of Asumpcion with murders and rapine, and then hurry back again to the south. If they have acted hostilities against the towns of the Guaranies, or the city of Corrientes, they betake themselves to the west. But if the territories of St. Iago or Cordoba have been the objects of their fury, they cunningly conceal themselves in the marshes, islands, and reedy places of the river Parana. For the Spaniards, however desirous, are not able to return the injuries of the savages, from the difficulty of the roads, or their want of acquaintance with them. It sometimes happens that a lake or marsh, which the Abipones swim with ease, obliges the Spanish cavalry to abandon the pursuit.

The whole territory of the Abipones scarcely contains a place which has not received a name from some memorable event or peculiarity of that neighbourhood. It may be proper to mention some of the most famous of these places; viz. *Netagrànac Lpátage*, the bird's nest; for in this place birds resembling storks yearly build their nests. *Liquinânala*, the cross, which was formerly fixed here by the Spaniards. *Nihírenac Leënerefquiè*, the cave of the tiger. *Paët Latetà*, the bruised teats. *Atopèhênra Lauaté*, the haunt of capibaris. *Lareca Caëpa*, the high trees. *Lalegrâicavalca*, the little white things. Hail of enormous size once fell in this place, and killed vast numbers of cattle. Many other places are named from the rivers that flow past them. The most considerable are the Evòfayè, the Parana, or Paraguay, the Iñatè, the Rio Grande, or Vermejo, the Ychimaye, or Rio Rey, the Neboquelatèl, or mother of palms, called by the Spaniards Malabrigo, the Narahage, or Inespin, the Lachaoquè Nâuè, Ycalc, Ycham, &c. the Rio Negro, Verde, Salado, &c.

In the sixtieth year of the present century, many families of Abipones removed, some to the banks of the Rio Grande, others to the more distant northern parts. The last Abiponian colony was nearly ten leagues north of the Rio Grande, in which situation we found that the Toba savages, who call themselves Nataguebit, had formerly resided.

## CHAPTER II. OF THE NATURAL COLOUR OF THE AMERICANS

When European painters have represented a man of a dark complexion, naked and hairy from head to foot, with flat distorted nostrils, threatening eyes, and a vast belly, a monster, in short, armed with a quiver, bow, arrows, and a club, and crowned with feathers of various colours, they think they have made an admirable portrait of an American Indian. And, indeed, before I saw America, I pictured the Americans to myself as agreeing with this description; but my own eyes soon convinced me of my error and I openly denounced the painters, to whom I had formerly given credit, as calumniators and romancers. Upon a near view of innumerable Indians of many nations, I could discover none of those deformities which are commonly ascribed to them. None of the Americans are black like Negroes, none so white as the Germans, English and French, but of this I am positive, that many of them are fairer than many Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians. The Americans have whitish faces, but this whiteness, in some nations, approaches more to a pasty colour, and in others is darker; a difference occasioned by diversity of climate, manner of living, or food. For those Indians who are exposed to the sun's heat in the open plain, must necessarily be of a darker colour than those who dwell always in the shade of forests, and never behold the sun. The women are fairer than the men, because they go out of doors less frequently, and whenever they travel on horseback, take greater care of their complexions, skreening their faces with fans made of the longer emu feathers.

I have often wondered that the savage Aucas, Puelches or Patagonians, and other inhabitants of the Magellanic region, who dwell nearer to the South Pole, should be darker than the Abipones, Mocobios, Tobas, and other tribes, who live in Chaco, about ten degrees farther north, and consequently suffer more from the heat. May not the difference of food have some effect upon the complexion? The Southern savages feed principally upon the flesh of emus and horses, in which the plains abound. Does this contribute nothing to render their skin dark? What, if we say that the whiteness of the skin is destroyed by very severe cold, as well as by extreme heat? Yet if this be the case, why are the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego more than moderately white: for that island is situated in the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, at the very extremity of South America, hard by the Antarctic Pole? May we not suppose that these Southern nations derive their origin from Africa, and brought the dark colour of the Africans into America? If any one incline to this opinion, let him consider by what means they crossed the immense sea which separates Africa from America, without the use of the magnet.

Many have written, and most persons at this day believe the Patagonians to be giants, perhaps the progeny of the Cyclops Polyphemus; but believe me when I say that the first are deceivers, and the latter their dupes. In the narrative of the voyage of the Dutch commander, Oliver Von Nord, who, in the year 1598, passed the Straits of Magellan, the Patagonians are asserted to be ten or eleven feet high. The English, who passed these straits in 1764, gave them eight feet of height. The good men must have looked at those savages through a magnifying-glass, or measured them with a pole. For in the year 1766, Captains Wallis and Carteret measured the Patagonians, and declared them to be only six feet, or six feet six inches high. They were again measured in 1764, by the famous Bourgainville, who found them to be of the same height as Wallis had done. Father Thomas Falconer, many years Missionary in the Magellanic region, laughs at the idea entertained by Europeans of the gigantic stature of the Patagonians, instancing Kangapol chief Cacique of that land, who exceeded all the other Patagonians in stature, and yet did not appear to him to be above seven feet high. Soon after my arrival, I saw a great number of these savages in the city of Buenos-Ayres. I did not, indeed, measure them, but spoke to some of them by an interpreter, and though most of them were remarkably tall, yet they by no means deserved the name of giants.

### CHAPTER III.

## OF THE PERSONS OF THE ABIPONES, AND THE CONFORMATION OF THEIR BODIES

The Abipones are well formed, and have handsome faces, much like those of Europeans, except in point of colour, which, though not entirely white, has nothing of the blackness of Negroes and Mulattoes. For that natural whiteness which they have in infancy is somewhat destroyed as they grow up, by the sun, and by the smoke: as nearly the whole of their lives is passed in riding about plains exposed to the beams of the sun, and the short time that they spend in their tents, they keep up a fire on the ground day and night, by the heat and smoke of which they are unavoidably somewhat darkened. Whenever the cold south wind blows, they move the fire to the bed, or place it underneath the hanging net in which they lie, and are thus gradually smoke-dried, like a gammon of bacon in a chimney. The women, when they ride out into the country, shield their faces from the sun's rays with an umbrella, and are, in consequence, generally fairer than the men, who, more ambitious to be dreaded by their enemies than to be loved, to terrify than attract beholders, think the more they are scarred and sun-burnt, the handsomer they are.

I observed that almost all the Abipones had black but rather small eyes; yet they see more acutely with them, than we do with our larger ones; being able clearly to distinguish such minute, or distant objects as would escape the eye of the most quick-sighted European. Frequently, in travelling, when we saw some animal running at a distance, and were unable to distinguish what it was, an Abipon would declare, without hesitation, whether it was a horse or a mule, and whether the colour was black, white, or grey; and on examining the object more closely, we always found him correct.

Moreover, in symmetry of shape, the Abipones yield to no other nation of America. I scarce remember to have seen one of them with a nose like what we see in the generality of Negroes, flat, crooked, turned up towards the forehead, or broader than it should be. The commonest shape is aquiline; as long and sharp as is consistent with beauty. An hundred deformities and blemishes, common among Europeans, are foreign to them. You never see an Abipon with a hump on his back, a wen, a hare lip, a monstrous belly, bandy legs, club feet, or an impediment in his speech. They have white teeth, almost all of which they generally carry to the grave quite sound. Paraguay sometimes produces dwarf horses, but never a dwarf Abipon, or any other Indian. Certain it is, that out of so many thousands of Indians, I never saw an individual of that description. Almost all the Abipones are so tall, that they might be enlisted amongst the Austrian musketeers.

The Abipones, as I told you before, are destitute of beard, and have perfectly smooth chins like all the other Indians, both of whose parents are Americans. If you see an Indian with a little beard, you may conclude, without hesitation, that one of his parents, or at any rate his grandfather, must have been of European extraction. I do not deny that a kind of down grows on the chins of the Americans, just as in sandy sterile fields, a straggling ear of corn is seen here and there; but even this they pull up by the roots whenever it grows. The office of barber is performed by an old woman, who sits on the ground by the fire, takes the head of the Abipon into her lap, sprinkles and rubs his face plentifully with hot ashes, which serve instead of soap, and then, with a pair of elastic horn tweezers, carefully plucks up all the hairs; which operation the savages declare to be devoid of pain, and that I might give the more credit to his words, one of them, applying a forceps to my chin, wanted to give me palpable demonstration of the truth. It was with difficulty that I extricated myself from the hands of the unlucky shaver, choosing rather to believe than groan.

The Abipones bear the pain inflicted by the old woman with the forceps, without complaining, that their faces may be smooth and clear; for they cannot endure them to be rough and hairy. For this reason, neither sex will suffer the hairs, with which our eyes are naturally fortified, but have their

eye-brows and eye-lashes continually plucked up. This nakedness of the eyes, though it disfigures the handsomest face in a high degree, they deem indispensable to beauty. They ridicule and despise the Europeans for the thick brows which overshadow their eyes, and call them brothers to the ostriches, who have very thick eye-brows. They imagine that the sight of the eye is deadened, and shaded by the adjacent hairs. Whenever they go out to seek honey, and return empty-handed, their constant excuse is, that their eye-brows and eye-lashes have grown, and prevented them from seeing the bees which conduct them to the hives. From the beard, let us proceed to the hair of the head.

All the Abipones have thick, raven-black locks; a child born with red or flaxen hair would be looked upon as a monster amongst them. The manner of dressing the hair differs in different nations, times, and conditions. The Abipones, previously to their entering colonies, shaved their hair like monks, leaving nothing but a circle of hair round the head. But the women of the Mbaya nation, after shaving the rest of their heads, leave some hairs untouched, to grow like the crest of a helmet, from the forehead to the crown. As the savages have neither razors nor scissors, they use a shell sharpened against a stone, or the jaws of the fish palometa, for the purpose of shaving. Most of the Abipones in our colonies let their hair grow long, and twist it into a rope like European soldiers. The same fashion was adopted by the women, but with this difference, that they tie the braid of hair with a little piece of white cotton, as our countrymen do with black.

At church, and in mournings for the dead, they scatter their hair about their shoulders. The Guarany Indians, on the contrary, whilst they live in the woods, without the knowledge of religion, let their hair hang down their backs: now that they have embraced Christianity, and entered various colonies, they crop it like priests. But the women of the Guarany towns wear their hair long, platted, and bound with a piece of white cotton, both in and out of doors, but dishevelled and flowing when they attend divine service. The Spanish peasantry also approach the door of the church with their hair tied in the military fashion, but loosen it on entering. Indeed, all the Americans are persuaded that this is a mark of reverence due to the sacred edifice.

As soon as they wake in the morning, the Abiponian women, sitting on the ground, dress, twist, and tie their husbands' hair. A bundle of boar's bristles, or of hairs out of a tamandua's tail, serves them for a comb. You very seldom see an Indian with natural, never with artificial curling hair. They do not grow grey till very late, and then not unless they are decrepid; very few of them get bald. It is worthwhile to mention a ridiculous custom of the Abipones, Mocobios, Tobas, &c. all of whom, without distinction of age or sex, pluck up the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head, so that the fore part of the head is bald almost for the space of two inches: this baldness they call *nalemrâ*, and account a religious mark of their nation. New-born infants have the hair of the fore part of their head cut off by a male or female juggler, these knaves performing the offices both of physicians and priests amongst them. This custom seems to me to have been derived from the Peruvian Indians, who used to cut their children's first hair, at two years of age, with a sharp stone for want of a knife. The ceremony was performed by the relations, one after another, according to the degrees of consanguinity; and at the same time a name was given to the infant.

It is also a custom, amongst the Abipones, to shave the heads of widows, not without much lamentation on the part of the women, and drinking on that of the men; and to cover them with a grey and black hood, made of the threads of the caraquatà, which it is reckoned a crime for her to take off till she marries again. A widower has his hair cropped with many ceremonies, and his head covered with a little net-shaped hat, which is not taken off till the hair grows again. All the men cut off their hair to mourn for the death of a Cacique. Amongst the Christian Guaranies, it is thought a most shameful and ignominious punishment, when any disreputable woman has her hair cut off. I have described the person which liberal nature has bestowed upon the Abipones; it now remains for me to show by what means they disfigure it.

## **CHAPTER IV. OF THE ANCIENT AND UNIVERSAL METHODS OF DISFIGURING THE PERSON**

Many Europeans spoil their beauty by eagerly imitating foreign customs, and always seeking new methods of adorning their persons. The Abipones disfigure and render themselves terrible to the sight from a too great attachment to the old customs of their ancestors; by whose example they mark their faces in various ways, some of which are common to both sexes, others peculiar to the women. They prick their skin with a sharp thorn, and scatter fresh ashes on the wound, which infuse an ineffaceable black dye. They all wear the form of a cross impressed on their foreheads, and two small lines at the corner of each eye extending towards the ears, besides four transverse lines at the root of the nose between the eye-brows, as national marks. These figures the old women prick with thorns, not only in the skin, but in the live flesh, and ashes sprinkled on them whilst streaming with blood render them of an indelible black. What these figures signify, and what they portend I cannot tell, and the Abipones themselves are no better informed on the subject. They only know that this custom was handed down to them from their ancestors, and that is sufficient.

I saw not only a cross marked on the foreheads of all the Abipones, but likewise black crosses woven in the red woollen garments of many. It is a very surprizing circumstance that they did this before they were acquainted with the religion of Christ, when the signification and merits of the cross were unknown to them. Perhaps they learnt some veneration for the cross, or gained an idea of its possessing great virtues from their Spanish captives, or from those Abipones who had lived in captivity amongst the Spaniards.

The Abiponian women, not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. The higher their rank, and the greater their beauty, the more figures they have; but this savage ornament is purchased with much blood and many groans. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married she is ordered to be marked according to custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman, and is pricked in order to be beautified. Thorns are used for a pencil, and ashes mixed with blood for paint. The ingenious, but cruel old woman, sticking the points of the thorns deep into the flesh, describes various figures till the whole face streams with blood. If the wretched girl does but groan, or draw her face away, she is loaded with reproaches, taunts and abuse. "No more of such cowardice," exclaims the old woman in a rage, "you are a disgrace to our nation, since a little tickling with thorns is so intolerable to you! Do you not know that you are descended from those who glory and delight in wounds? For shame of yourself, you faint-hearted creature! You seem to be softer than cotton. You will die single, be assured. Which of our heroes would think so cowardly a girl worthy to be his wife? But if you will only be quiet and tractable, I'll make you more beautiful than beauty itself." Terrified by these vociferations, and fearful of becoming the jest and derision of her companions, the girl does not utter a word, but conceals the sense of pain in silence, and with a cheerful countenance, and lips unclosed through dread of reproach, endures the torture of the thorns, which is not finished in one day. The first day she is sent home with her face half pricked with the thorns, and is recalled the next, the next after that, and perhaps oftener, to have the rest of her face, her breast and arms pricked in like manner. Meantime she is shut up for several days in her father's tent, and wrapped in a hide that she may receive no injury from the cold air. Carefully abstaining from meat, fishes, and some other sorts of food, she feeds upon nothing but a little fruit which grows upon brambles; and, though frequently known to produce ague, conduces much towards cooling the blood.

The long fast, together with the daily effusion of blood, renders the young girls extremely pale. The chin is not dotted like the other parts, but pierced with one stroke of the thorn in straight lines,

upon which musical characters might be written. All thorns seem to have a poisonous quality, and consequently, from being scratched with them, the eyes, cheeks, and lips are horridly swelled, and imbibe a deep black from the ashes placed on the wounded skin; so that a girl, upon leaving the house of that barbarous old woman, looks like a Stygian fury, and forces you involuntarily to exclaim, *Oh! quantum Niobe, Niobe distabat ab iliâ!* The savage parents themselves are sometimes moved to pity at the sight of her, but never dream of abolishing this cruel custom; for they think their daughters are ornamented by being thus mangled, and at the same time instructed and prepared to bear the pains of parturition in future. Though I detested the hard-heartedness of the old women in thus torturing the girls, yet the skill they display in the operation always excited my wonder. For on both cheeks they form all sorts of figures with wondrous proportion, variety, and equality of the lines, with the aid of no other instrument than thorns of various sizes. Every Abiponian woman you see has a different pattern on her face. Those that are most painted and pricked you may know to be of high rank and noble birth, and if you meet a woman with but three or four black lines on her face, you may be quite certain she is either a captive, or of low birth. When Christian discipline was firmly established in the Abiponian colonies, this vile custom was by our efforts abolished, and the women now retain their natural appearance.

## CHAPTER V. OF THE PERFORATION OF THE LIPS AND EARS OF THE SAVAGES

The Abipones, like all the other American savages, used formerly to pierce their lower lip with a hot iron, or a sharp reed. Into the hole some insert a reed and others a small tube of bone, glass, gum, or yellow brass; an ornament allowed only to the men when they are seven years old, never to the women. This custom has long since been abolished amongst the later Abipones, but is still continued by the Guaranies who inhabit the woods, by the Mbayas, Guanas, and Payaguas. These people think themselves most elegantly adorned when they have a brass pipe a span long, and about the thickness of a goose's quill, hanging from the lip to the breast. But this imaginary ornament renders them very formidable to European strangers; for they are of great height, their bodies are painted with juices of various colours, and their hair stained of a blood red; the wing of a vulture is stuck in one of their ears, and strings of glass beads hung round their neck, arms, knees and legs; thus accoutred they walk the streets smoking tobacco out of a very long reed; figures in every respect terrible to behold.

The thing which is inserted into the lip, of whatever material it may be made, is called by the Guaranies *tembetà*, and is universally used by them whilst they wander about the woods without religion; but after being converted to Christianity and settled in colonies they throw away this lip appendage. The hole of the lip, which neither salve nor plaster will cure, however, remains, and in speaking the saliva sometimes flows profusely through it; it also impedes them a little in pronouncing some words. All the plebeian Indians whom I discovered in the woods of Mbaeverá, both youths and adults, used a short slender reed for the *tembetà*; but that of the three caciques was made of a gold-coloured gum or rosin. At first sight I could have sworn that it was glass. In the heat of the sun that beautiful gum flows plentifully from the tree *abati timbabỹ*, and falls gradually into the models of *tembetàs*, crosses, globes, or any other figure they like: exposed to the air it grows as hard as a stone, so that no liquid can ever melt it, but still retains its glassy transparency. If this rosin of the tree *abati timbabỹ* were not possessed of singular hardness, the *tembetà* made of it, after remaining whole days in the lip of the savage, and being covered with saliva, would soften, and dissolve.

Do not imagine that there is but one method of piercing the lip amongst the savages. The anthropophagi do not pierce the lower lip but cut it to the length of the mouth in such a manner, that when the wound terminates in a scar they look as if they had two mouths. They wander up and down the woods, and are often, but fruitlessly exhorted by the Jesuits, not without peril to themselves, to embrace our religion. The Indians of Brazil and Paraguay formerly delighted in human flesh. Many of them, after having been long accustomed to Christian discipline in our towns, sometimes confessed that the flesh of kine or of any wild animal tastes extremely flat and insipid to them, in comparison with that of men. We have known the Mocobios and Tobas, for want of other food, eat human flesh even at this day. Some hundreds of the last-mentioned savages fell suddenly upon Alaykin, cacique of the Abipones, about day-break as he was drinking in a distant plain with a troop of his followers. An obstinate combat was carried on for some time, at the end of which the wounded Abipones escaped by flight. Alaykin himself and six of his fellow-soldiers fell in the engagement, and were afterwards roasted and devoured by the hungry victors. An Abiponian boy of twelve years old, who used to eat at our table, was killed at the same time by these savages, and added to the repast, being eaten with the rest; but an old Abiponian woman, who had been slain there with many wounds, they left on the field untouched, her flesh being too tough to be used. Now let me speak a little of the adorning, or, more properly, torturing of the ears.

The use of ear-rings, which is very ancient, and varies amongst various nations, is highly ridiculous amongst the Americans. The ears of very young children of both sexes are always

perforated. Few of the men wear ear-rings, but some of the older ones insert a small piece of cow's horn, wood, or bone, a woollen thread of various colours, or a little knot of horn into their ears. Almost all the married women have ear-rings, made in the following manner. They twist a very long palm leaf two inches wide into a spire, like a bundle of silk thread, and wider in circumference than the larger wafer which we use in sacrifice. This roll is gradually pushed farther and farther into the hole of the ear; by which means in the course of years the skin of the ear is so much stretched, and the hole so much enlarged, that it folds very tightly round the whole of that palm leaf spire, and flows almost down to the shoulders. The palm leaf itself, when in this spiral form, has an elastic power which daily dilates the hole of the ear more and more. Do not think that I have exaggerated the size of this spire and the capaciousness of the ear. With these eyes, by the aid of which I am now writing, I daily beheld innumerable women laden with this monstrous ear-ring, and very many men even of other nations. For those most barbarous people the Oaëkakałòts and Tobas, and other American nations out of Paraguay, use the same ear-rings as the Abiponian women. The Guarany women wear brass ear-rings sometimes three inches in diameter, not however inserted into the ear, but suspended from it.

The Paraguayrians seem to have learnt the various use of ear-rings from Peru. Its famous king and legislator, the Inca Manco Capac, permitted his subjects to perforate their ears, provided however that all the ear-holes should be smaller than those he himself used. He assigned various ear-rings to all the people in the various provinces: some inserted a bit of wood into their ears; some a piece of white wool not bigger than a man's thumb; others a bulrush; others the bark of a tree. Three nations were allowed the privilege of larger ear-rings than the rest. All persons of royal descent wore for ear-rings very wide rings which were suspended by a long band, and hung down to the breast. The Paraguayrians, who had at first imitated the Peruvians, in course of ages invented still more ridiculous ear-rings, none of which a European could behold without laughter.

As the Abipones deprive their eyes of brows and lashes, pierce their lips and ears, prick their faces with thorns and mark them with figures, pluck the down from their chins, and pull up a quantity of hair from the fore part of their heads, I always greatly wondered at their preserving the nose untouched and unhurt, the cartilage of which the Africans, Peruvians, and Mexicans formerly perforated, sometimes inserting a string of beads into the hole. According to Father Joseph Acosta, book VII. chap. 17, Tikorik, king of the Mexicans, wore a fine emerald suspended from his nostrils. The Brazilians from their earliest age perforate not the lower lip alone but also other parts of the face, inserting very long pebbles into the fissures; a frightful spectacle, as the Jesuit Maffei affirms in the second book of his History of the Indies. You would call the faces of the Brazilians tessellated work or mosaic. But the Parthians delighted still more in deforming themselves; for, according to Tertullian, Lib. I., cap. 10. De Cultu Fœmin, they pierced almost every part of their bodies for the admission of pebbles or precious stones. If Diodorus Siculus Lib. IV. cap. 1. may be credited, the female Negroes bordering on Arabia perforated their lips for the same purpose. From all this it appears that the savages of America are not the only people who have adopted the foolish custom of marking their bodies in various ways.

## **CHAPTER VI. OF THE STRENGTH AND LONGEVITY OF THE ABIPONES**

Truly ridiculous are those persons who, without ever having beheld America even from a distance, have written with more boldness than truth that all the Americans, without distinction, are possessed of little strength, weakly bodies, and bad constitutions, which cannot be said of the generality of them. Their habit of body varies according to climate, country, food, and occupation; as we find those Europeans who breathe the healthy mountain air of Styria more robust than those who grow sallow with ague in the marshy plains of the Bannat. Negro slaves brought in ships were often exposed to sale, like cattle, in the streets of Lisbon, whilst I was in that city. Those from Angola, Congo, Cape de Verd, and above all the island of Madagascar are eagerly chosen, being generally of strong health and superior activity. Africans, natives of that country which the Portugueze call Costa de la Mina, can scarcely find a purchaser, being generally weak, slothful, and impatient of labour, because they inhabit nearest to the equator, where there is little or no wind, tepid air, and frequent rain. In sailing to Paraguay we were detained in that neighbourhood by a continuous calm, and remained stationary there for full three weeks, roasted by the heat of the sun, and daily washed with warm showers. Who can wonder that this languishing climate produces languid and weakly bodies, though strong robust people are found in other parts of Africa? From this you may know what to think of so extensive a region as America, and of its inhabitants. Its various provinces and even different parts of the provinces differ essentially in the properties of the air, food, and habitations, which produces a variety in the constitutions of the inhabitants, some being weak, some very strong.

Let others write of the other Americans to whom and what they choose: I shall not contradict them. Of the Paraguayrians I confidently affirm that the equestrian nations greatly excel the pedestrians in beauty of form, loftiness of stature, strength, health, and longevity. The bodies of the Abipones are muscular, robust, agile, and extremely tolerant of the inclemencies of the sky. You scarcely ever see a fat or pot-bellied person amongst them. Daily exercise in riding, hunting, and in sportive and serious contests prevents them almost always from growing fat, for like apes they are always in motion. They consequently enjoy such an excellent habit of body, and such sound health as most Europeans might envy. Many diseases which afflict and exhaust Europeans are not even known by name amongst them. Gout, dropsy, epilepsy, jaundice, stone, &c. are words foreign and monstrous to their ears. They expose their bare heads for whole days to the heat of the sun, and yet you never hear one of them complain of head-ache. You would swear they were devoid of feeling, or made of brass or marble; yet even these grow hot when acted on by the rays of the sun. After having been long parched with thirst in dry deserts, they drink large draughts of marshy, salt, muddy, stinking, bitter water, without injury. They greedily swallow quantities of hard, half-roasted beef, venison, tiger's and emu's flesh, and the eggs of the latter, without experiencing any consequent languor of the stomach, or difficulty of digestion. They often swim across vast rivers in cold rainy weather without contracting any ill affection of the bowels or bladder, which was often troublesome to the Europeans in swimming, and, if succeeded by strangury, dangerous. They ride seated on saddles made of hard leather during journeys of many weeks, and yet such long sitting does not injure the external skin even. They are unprovided with stirrups, and often use trotting horses, yet after many hours of uninterrupted riding you can perceive no signs of fatigue or exhaustion in any of them. Stretched on a cold turf, should a sudden shower descend, they pass the night swimming in water, yet never know what the colic or the gout is. The Spaniards run the risk of both after being long drenched with rain water, which, when it touches the skin, affects the body most terribly in America, often producing syncope, and sometimes pustules and ulcers. I have frequently seen Spanish soldiers faint in the church from having

been wetted with rain on their way thither. The Abipones pass many days and nights amid constant rain uninjured, because their feet are bare; for the moisture contracted from rain hurts the feet when they are wrapt up more than when they are uncovered; as, finding no vent when it exhales, it creeps inwards, penetrates the bones and nerves, and affects the rest of the body in a terrible manner. But I can give you further proof of the strength of the Abipones.

If a thorn of any plant happens to stick in their foot, and to break there, so that it cannot be pulled out by the finger, they will coolly cut the little piece of flesh, to which the thorn adheres, with a knife. When they go out to act the part of spies, or to reconnoitre distant places, they sit with both feet upon the horse's back. They climb high trees, and sit quietly on their boughs, in order to plunder the hives concealed there, without any sense of danger or giddiness. After their removal to our colonies, being fatigued with handling the axe and the plough, instruments to which they were unaccustomed, and feeling their strength fail them, their bodies bathed in sweat, and burning with heat, they exclaimed, *La yivichigui yauigra*, now my blood is angry. For this they have a ready remedy: they plunge a knife deep into their leg, watch the blood spouting from it for some time with pleased eyes, and at length stop it by applying a clod to the wound, saying with a cheerful voice that they are recovered, and feel perfectly well. They are as lavish, and almost prodigal in shedding their blood, for the purpose of obtaining glory, as of procuring health; for in public drinking parties they cruelly prick their breast, arms and tongue with a bundle of thorns, or with the sharp bones of a crocodile's back, with much effusion of blood. They emulate one another in doing this, in order to obtain a reputation for bravery, and that these spontaneous wounds may render them less fearful of shedding their blood in engagements with the enemy, and may make their skin impenetrable by covering it with scars. Boys of seven years old pierce their little arms in imitation of their parents, and display plenty of wounds, indications of courage superior to their years, and preludes of war, for which they are educated from earliest infancy.

Persons wasted to a skeleton, and with every symptom of fever and consumption, we have seen restored to health by daily eating and drinking the alfaroba. When seized with a violent disorder, or dangerously wounded, they recover by the use of this easily obtained remedy, or, like dogs, without any at all. I have often with horror beheld many of them wounded with various kinds of weapons, their side pierced, their bones and ribs broken, their breath drawn with difficulty, the blood streaming from their numerous wounds; themselves, in short, the breathing images of death. When I saw these very Abipones a few weeks afterwards, riding or drinking, in full health, I could attribute it to nothing but the strength of their constitutions; for it certainly could not be owing to their unskilful physicians and inefficacious medicines. Every one knows that small-pox and measles are almost the only, and by far the most calamitous pest by which America is exhausted. The Abipones take the infection like the other Indians, but seldom fall victims to the disease, though, whilst under its influence, they are less careful of themselves than the other natives. Owing to the more healthy temperature of their blood and humours, it does not cause either so much, or such noxious matter in them as it does in others. Of the small-pox I shall discourse more fully hereafter. They live and enjoy their health many years after they have been wounded with leaden bullets without ever suffering them to be extracted: as a proof of their strength they often showed us a bullet sticking, without injury, in their arm or foot, and offered it us to handle. It is still more remarkable that a musket ball seldom proves fatal to the Abipones, unless it strike the heart or the head: their Cacique, the renowned Kaapetraikin, received a ball of this kind into his forehead without any dangerous consequences. Considering these things I often wondered why the savages dreaded firearms so much, since they very rarely proved fatal to them. But as children are afraid of ignes fatui, though harmless; in like manner the Indians fear the report more than the ball, which they so often find to miss of its aim, and prove formidable to the air alone. These instances will, if I mistake not, do something towards convincing Europeans of the strength of the Abipones. Neither shall I ever be a convert to the opinion that the Americans are possessed of a duller and less acute sense of corporal inconvenience. The Abipones are highly sensible of the

impressions of the elements, the injuries of weapons, and the pain arising from these causes, but are not so much overcome and exhausted by them as most others, either because they are blessed with a better temperature of blood and humours, and greater strength of limbs and muscles, or because the hardships they have been accustomed to from childhood, render them callous, or because their eager thirst after military fame impels them to deny that anything gives them pain, though they be ever so much affected by it.

I have already observed that they seldom grow bald, and not grey till at an advanced period of life. Even when arrived at extreme age they can hardly be said to have grown old, like certain plants which are always green and vigorous. Cicero, in his treatise on Old Age, bestows great praise on Massinissa, king of Mauritania, who, at ninety years of age, *cùm ingressus iter pedibus sit, in equum omninò non ascendit: cùm equo, ex equo non descendit. Nullo imbre, nullo frigore adducitur, ut capite aperto sit. Exequitur omnia regis officia et munera, etc.* The Roman orator would find all the old Abipones so many Massinissas, or even more vigorous than Massinissa. He would scarce believe his own eyes were he to see men, almost a hundred years old, leap on to a fiery horse, without the aid of a stirrup, like a boy of twelve years old, sit it for hours, and even whole days, beneath a burning sun, climb trees for honey, travel or lie upon the ground in cold or rainy weather, contend with the enemy in battle, shrink from no toils of the army or the chase, evince wonderful acuteness both of sight and hearing, preserve all their teeth quite sound, and seem only to be distinguished by the number of their years from men in the prime of life. All these things will hardly be credited in Europe where they are so rare. In the colonies of the Abipones I daily beheld old men, like youths in every other respect but that of age, without surprize. If a man dies at eighty he is lamented as if cut off in the flower of his age. Women generally live longer than men, because they are not killed in war, and because the moistness of their nature renders them more long lived. You find so many old women a hundred years of age, amongst the Abipones, that you may wonder at, but will scarce be able to count them. I cannot say that the pedestrian nations of Paraguay enjoy equal strength and longevity. The Guaranies, Lules, Isistines, Vilelas, and other pedestrian Indians, are subject to diseases like the Europeans, and both feel old age, and discover it by their habit of body. Their lives, like those of Europeans, are sometimes short, sometimes long. You find very few men a hundred years old, or even approaching to that age amongst them. It is worth while to investigate the causes of this exceeding vigour of the Abipones.

## CHAPTER VII. WHY THE ABIPONES ARE SO VIGOROUS AND LONG-LIVED

The Abipones are indebted for their strength and longevity partly to their parents, partly to themselves. The vigour of youth, preserved by temperance, accompanies them during the whole of their lives, and is even transmitted to their children. The Abipones never indulge in licentious gratifications during youth, and though of a fiery temperament, debilitate their constitutions by no irregularities. They amuse themselves with conversation, mirth, and jesting, but always within the limits of modesty. By a sort of natural instinct peculiar to themselves, both boys and girls, hold in abhorrence all means and opportunities of infringing the laws of decorum: you never see them talking together either publicly or privately; never idling in the street. The girls love to assist their mothers in domestic employments; the continual exercise of arms and horses engrosses the chief attention of the young men.

The Indians of other nations are often shorter, slenderer, and less robust. Many of them consume away before they arrive at manhood; others grow prematurely old, and die an untimely death. Do you enquire the cause? I will tell you my opinion on the subject. Many are unhealthy because their parents are so; others from being oppressed with Labour, and very poorly provided with food, clothes, and lodging; the majority because they have exhausted their natural vigour by indulging from their earliest youth in shameful pleasures. *Libidinosa etenim, et intemperans adolescentia effætum corpus tradit senectuti*, as Cicero observes, in his treatise on Old Age. How many of those who die a premature death would deserve to have this epitaph engraven on their tomb, *Nequitia est quæ te non sinit esse senem*. Too early marriages are often a cause why we find the other Indians weaker and less vigorous and long-lived than the Abipones, who never think of entering the matrimonial state till they are near thirty years old, and never marry a woman under twenty; which, as philosophers and physicians say, conduces much to the preservation of strength, lengthening of life, and producing robust children. It cannot be doubted, that tender parents never produce very strong children; and since the affections of the mind are consequences of the habit of the body, as Galen teaches with much prolixity, it cannot be wondered that such children should be as imbecile in mind as in body.

Their education also conduces greatly to form the manners and strengthen the bodies of the Abipones. For, as Quintilian observes, in his first book of Institutes, that soft kind of breeding, which we call indulgence, relaxes all the nerves both of the mind and body. No one can object to the education of the Abipones on account of its delicacy. The children are plunged into a cold stream, if there be one at a convenient distance, as soon as they see the light. They know of no such things as cradles, feathers, cushions, swathing-clothes, blandishments, and toys. Covered with a light garment of otters' skins, they sleep wherever chance directs, and crawl upon the ground like little pigs. Whenever a mother has to take a journey on horseback, she places the child in a bag made of boars' skins, and suspended from the saddle along with the puppies, pots, gourds, &c. The husband will often come and snatch his little son, as he is sucking, from its mother's arms, set him on his own horse, and behold him riding with eyes sparkling with pleasure. When a mother is swimming in a river for the sake of a bath, she presses her infant to her breast with one hand, while she uses the other as an oar. If the child be pretty big, it is thrown into the water, that it may learn to swim while it is but just beginning to walk. You seldom see little boys but just weaned walking in the street without a bow and arrow. They shoot birds, flies, and all kinds of small animals. Their usual amusement is shooting at a mark. They go out every day on horseback, and ride races with one another. All these things undoubtedly conduce much towards strengthening and enlarging the body. Would that European mothers could be brought to discard the unnatural artifices and indulgences used in the

bringing up of their children! Oh that they would moderate the bandages and cloths with which they bind, and as it were imprison and enchain the tender little bodies of their infants! then should we see fewer bandy-legged, hump-backed, dwarfish, weak, and diseased persons in Europe.

The Abipones wear a garment not tight to their bodies, but loose and flowing down to their heels; calculated to cover, not load and oppress the body, and to defend it from the injuries of the weather, without preventing the perspiration, or impeding the circulation of the blood. All the wise people of the east, and most of the ancient Germans, made choice of a large wide garment. What if we say that their bodies were consequently larger, and filled a wider space? Those who wish to enjoy their health, should attend to the maxim *ne quid nimis*, in dress as well as in other things. On the other hand too scanty clothing is assuredly prejudicial to health. Prudent persons vary their dress according to the state of the air, as seamen shift their sails. Even the Abipones of both sexes, and of every age, though satisfied at other times with a woollen garment, put on a kind of cloak, skilfully sewed, of otters' skins, when the cold south wind is blowing. This skin garment bears some sort of resemblance to the cloak which we priests wear to sing vespers in the church.

Galen, in his work on the preservation of the health, boldly and truly asserts that too great repose of body is highly prejudicial, but moderate and proper motion, on the other hand, of the utmost utility. This is consonant to the words of Celsus, Lib. I. c. 1. *Ignavia corpus hebetat, labor firmat; illa præmaturam senectam, iste longam adolescentiam reddit*. You cannot therefore be surprized that the Abipones are athletic like the Macrobii. They are in continual motion. Riding, hunting, and swimming are their daily employments. War, either against men or beasts, occasions them to take very long excursions. Their business is to swim across rivers, climb trees to gather honey, make spears, bows, and arrows, weave ropes of leather, dress saddles, practise every thing, in short, fatiguing to the hands or feet. But if they indulge themselves with an intermission of these employments, they ride horseraces for a sword which is given to him who reaches the goal first. Another very common game amongst the Abipones is one which they play on foot. The instrument with which it is performed is a piece of wood about two hands long, rounded like a staff, thicker at the extremities and slenderer in the middle. This piece of wood they throw to the mark, with a great effort, in such a manner that it strikes the ground every now and then, and rebounds, like the stones which boys throw along the surface of a river. Fifty and often a hundred men stand in a row and throw this piece of wood by turns, and he who flings it the farthest and the straightest obtains the sword.

This game, which from boys they are accustomed to play at for hours together, amuses and fatigues them with wonderful benefit to their health. The same piece of wood which serves both as an instrument of peace and war, is made formidable use of by many of the savages to crush the bodies of their enemies and of wild beasts. The Abipones hate to lead the life of a snail, idle and listless, and consequently do not undergo a swift and miserable decay, like those who are stupefied with sloth, confined to their bed, table, or gaming-table, and seldom stir out into the street or country. The Abiponian women, though debarred from the sports and equestrian contests of the men, have scarce time to rest or breathe, so much are they occupied day and night with the management of their domestic affairs. Hence that masculine vigour of the females in producing almost gigantic offspring, hence their strength and longevity.

The food also to which the Abipones are accustomed, in my judgment contributes not a little to prolong their lives. What Tacitus says of the ancient Germans is applicable to them: *Cibi simplices, agrestia poma, recens fera, aut lac concretum, sine apparatu, sine blandimentis expellunt famem*. They feed, as chance directs, upon beef, or the flesh of wild animals, mostly roasted, but seldom boiled. If the plain afford them no wild beasts to hunt, the water will supply their hunger with various kinds of fish besides otters, ducks, capibaris, &c. From the air also they receive birds that are by no means to be despised, and from the woods divers fruits, to appease the cravings of appetite. Should all these be wanting, roots concealed beneath the ground or the water are converted into food. Necessity alone will induce them to taste fishes, though excellent. Tigers' flesh, spite of its vile odour, is in such

esteem amongst them that if one of them kills a tiger, he cuts it into small portions, and divides it amongst himself and his companions, that all the hordesmen may share in what they think so delightful a delicacy. It is an old complaint amongst physicians that new seasonings of food imported from the new world have brought with them new diseases into Europe. This complaint cannot affect the Abipones, who are unacquainted with seasonings, and feed upon simple fare. They detest vinegar; and salt, though as fond of it as goats, they are seldom able to obtain, their land producing neither salt nor salt-pits. To remedy this deficiency they burn a shrub called by the Spaniards *vidriera*, and sprinkle its ashes, which have a saltish taste, on meat and on tobacco leaves, previously chewed and kneaded together with the saliva of old women. But as many of the Abiponian hordes are destitute of this shrub, the ashes of which are used for salt, they generally eat their meat unsalted. No one ever denied that the moderate use of salt is wholesome, for it sucks up noxious humours, and prevents putrefaction: but the too frequent use of it deadens the eye-sight, exhausts the better juices, and creates acrid ones injurious both to the blood and skin, by which means physicians say that the urinal passages are frequently hurt. We found in Paraguay that horses, mules, oxen, and sheep fattened only in those pastures where plenty of nitre, or some saltish substance was mixed with the grass; if that be wanting the cattle very soon become ragged and lean. Meat sprinkled with salt will keep a long time, but the more plentifully it is salted the sooner it stinks and putrefies, the moisture into which salt dissolves united with heat accelerating putrefaction. Beef hardened by the air alone, and fish dried with nothing but smoke, will keep many months without a grain of salt, as I and all the savages know from experience. When we sailed back from Paraguay to Europe our chief provisions consisted of meat part salted, part dried by the air alone. The latter from having no salt in it remained well tasted and free from decay till we reached the port of Cadiz, while the other soon putrefied and was thrown into the sea even by the hungry sailors. Now hear what inference I draw from all this. Since the Abipones, though they use salt but seldom and in small quantities, are generally healthy and long-lived, I cannot but suspect that abstinence from salt conduces more to the well being of the body than the too unsparing use of it.

That diet regulating both meat and drink is the source of a late old age, firm health, and long life is unanimously agreed by all the great physicians and philosophers. I have repeatedly affirmed that the Abipones are vigorous, and long-lived, yet who can call them studious of diet? They eat when, as much, and as often as they like. They have no fixed hours for dinner or for supper, but if food be at hand will dine as soon as they wake. Hungry at all hours they eat at all hours; and an appetite will never be wanting if they have wherewith to exercise it upon. You would think that the more they devour the sooner they are hungry. They are voracious, and, like the other Americans, cram themselves with flesh, but without injury to their health; for their stomachs, which will bear both a great quantity of food, and long abstinence from it, are weakened neither by gormandizing nor by extreme hunger. They undertake JOURNEYS of many months unfurnished with any provision. A sufficiency of proper food is often not to be met with on the way, either from the want of an opportunity of hunting, or from the unintermitting haste with which the desire of surprizing, or necessity of flying the enemy obliges them to pursue their journey. Yet an empty belly and barking stomach never do them any harm, nor even prevent them from cheerfully conversing to still the sense of hunger. On such occasions you see them betray no sign of impatience, nor complain of any indisposition of body. I do not pretend to deny that temperance in eating and drinking is the parent of longevity, and gluttony that of disease and premature death; knowing that many saintly hermits have prolonged their lives to an hundred years, spite of continual fasting, and that perhaps they would have attained a still greater age had they taken more nourishment. Yet I scarce wonder that these Christian heroes lived so long, upon poor and sparing diet, because they were always celibate, and remained fixed to one spot without ever experiencing great fatigue. Neither, on the other hand, does it surprize me that the Abipones should enjoy such singular longevity, united with so much voracity; for they, who are all married, weary themselves with running, hunting, swimming, riding, and military exercises, and consequently to

recruit their strength, require, and easily digest a greater quantity of food: for their vigour would decay and their great bodies languish were they not frequently reinvigorated with plenty of victuals. The Abipones are daily obliged to assuage their thirst with river or marsh water, which is generally tepid or warm, very seldom cold, and not always quite fresh: might not this be a circumstance conducive to health? For physicians prefer river or rain water to that of a spring, because it is lighter and impregnated with fewer noxious particles. The Chinese never taste a drop of cold water. Many think that snow and ice-water cause divers disorders. Snow, ice, springs of water, and subterranean cells for cooling liquors are no where to be found in the territories of the Abipones, who are also unacquainted with wine expressed from grapes, or burnt out of fruits by chemic art. But though they use nothing but water to quench their thirst, yet on the birth of a child, the death of a relation, a resolution of war, or a victory, they assemble together to drink a strong liquor made of honey or the alfaroba infused in water, which when fermented causes intoxication, but taken moderately is of much service to the health. For it is universally thought that the alfaroba and wild honey conduce much to prolong life and confirm the health. The Abipones are in the habit of drinking honey, in which the woods abound, very frequently; what if we call this a cause of their vigour and longevity? Both however they partly owe to the use of the alfaroba, which they either eat dried, or drink in great quantities, as wine, when fermented in water by its own native heat. Taken either way it possesses singular virtue, for it restores the exhausted strength, fattens the body, clears and refreshes the breast, quickly and copiously discharges the bladder by its diuretic property, radically cures many disorders, is extremely efficacious against the stone, and affords a strong alleviation to nephritic diseases. Persons who had tried it assured me of its possessing those virtues. More robust and healthy horses are no where to be found throughout the wide extent of Paraguay, than those born in the territory of St. Iago del Estero, because they feed principally upon the alfaroba.

Add to this that the Abipones bathe almost every day in some lake or river. Bathing was certainly much practised, and reckoned of singular utility amongst the ancients. For as the dirt is washed off by the water, the pores of the skin are opened, and the perspiration of the body rendered easier and more commodious; a great advantage to the health. Some prefer cold bathing to bleeding, for by the one process the blood is only cooled, by the other it is exhausted. To continual bathing therefore, the Abipones are in a great measure indebted for the health and longevity which they possess to such an enviable degree. This opinion is confirmed in Bacon's History of Life and Death, where it is asserted that "washing in cold water contributes to lengthen life, and that the use of warm baths has a contrary effect." P. 131. The same author is of opinion that "persons who pass great part of their lives out of doors are generally longer-lived than those that stay more within." The Abipones spend most of their time out of the house, and consequently breathe the pure air of heaven which is so salutary to the human body. Though they dwell under mats spread like a tent, or in fixed huts, they never suffer the air to be entirely excluded. Nor are they content with living in the open air, they also choose to be buried there, entertaining an incredible repugnance to sepulchres within the church. As the Abipones live long and enjoy excellent health, though entirely destitute of physicians and druggists, I can hardly help reckoning their absence amongst the causes which co-operate to render the savages superior in vigour and longevity to most Europeans, amongst whom as physicians are numerous, and medicine in general use, there are many sick persons and few very old men. The Abiponian physicians, of whom I shall speak more fully hereafter, are impostors more ignorant than brutes, and totally unworthy the splendid title of physicians, being born not to heal the sick, but to cheat them with juggleries and frauds.

That health of body depends in a high degree upon tranquillity of mind is incontestible: the functions of the brain are disturbed, the stomach grows languid, the strength fails for want of food, and the better juices are destroyed, when the mind is oppressed by turbulent affections, by anxiety, love, fear, anger, or sadness. The body will be sane if inhabited by a sane mind. This being the case, we cannot wonder that the Abipones are possessed of great vigour and longevity. Their minds are

generally in a tranquil state. They live reckless of the past, little curious about the present, and very seldom anxious for the future. They fear danger, but either from not perceiving or from despising the weightiness of it, always think themselves able to subdue or avoid it. When a numerous foe is announced to be at hand they either provide for their safety by a timely flight, or await the assault, and amidst jocund songs quaff mead, their elixir, which inspires them with courage, and banishes fear. Gnawing cares about the augmentation of their property, or concerning food and raiment, have no place amongst them. They make no mortal of such account as to die, or run mad, for hate or love of him. No affections with them are either violent or of long duration. This tranquillity of mind cherishes the body, and prolongs their lives to extreme old age. I allow that the climate in which they live, and which is neither starved with cold nor parched with heat, is one strengthener of the health, but I deny that it is the only one; for neither the Spaniards nor the other Indians, though they enjoy the same temperature of air, live and thrive like the Abipones. Europeans, if they envy the longevity of the Abipones, should imitate, as far as possible, their manner of life. They should tranquillize their minds by subduing vehement passions. They should interpose a little exercise of body between inaction, and sedentary occupations; they should mingle water with wine, rest with labour. They should moderate their luxuries in dress and eating. They should use simple food, not such as is adulterated by art, and for the purpose of satisfying, not of provoking the appetite, but make sparing application to medicines and physicians. And lastly, which is of the greatest importance for preserving vigour, they should abhor pleasures, the sure destruction of the body, as much as they desire a green old age.

## CHAPTER VIII. OF THE RELIGION OF THE ABIPONES

*Hæc est summa delicti, nolle recognoscere quem ignorare non possit*, are the words of Tertullian, in his Apology for the Christians. Theologians agree in denying that any man in possession of his reason can, without a crime, remain ignorant of God for any length of time. This opinion I warmly defended in the University of Cordoba, where I finished the four years' course of theology begun at Gratz in Styria. But what was my astonishment, when on removing from thence to a colony of Abipones, I found that the whole language of these savages does not contain a single word which expresses God or a divinity. To instruct them in religion, it was necessary to borrow the Spanish word for God, and insert into the catechism *Dios ecnam caogarik*, God the creator of things.

Penafiel, a Jesuit theologian, declared that there were many Indians who, on being asked whether, during the whole course of their lives, they ever thought of God, replied *no, never*. The Portugueze and Spaniards, who first landed on the shores of America, affirmed that they could discover scarcely any traces of the knowledge of God amongst the Brazilians, and other savages. The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, declares that this ignorance of God is by no means devoid of blame, and indeed that it cannot be excused; *so that they are without excuse, because from the very sight of the things created, they might arrive at the knowledge of God the Creator*. But if any one think the case admits of palliation, he will say that the American savages are slow, dull, and stupid in the apprehension of things not present to their outward senses. Reasoning is a process troublesome and almost unknown to them. It is, therefore, no wonder that the contemplation of terrestrial or celestial objects should inspire them with no idea of the creative Deity, nor indeed of any thing heavenly. Travelling with fourteen Abipones, I sat down by the fire in the open air, as usual, on the high shore of the river Plata. The sky, which was perfectly serene, delighted our eyes with its twinkling stars. I began a conversation with the Cacique Ychoalay, the most intelligent of all the Abipones I have been acquainted with, as well as the most famous in war. "Do you behold," said I, "the splendour of Heaven, with its magnificent arrangement of stars? Who can suppose that all this is produced by chance? The waggon, as you yourself know, is overturned, unless the oxen have some one to guide them. A boat will either sink, or go out of the right course, if destitute of a pilot. Who then can be mad enough to imagine that all these beauties of the Heavens are the effect of chance, and that the revolutions and vicissitudes of the celestial bodies are regulated without the direction of an omniscient mind? Whom do you believe to be their creator and governour? What were the opinions of your ancestors on the subject?" "My father," replied Ychoalay, readily and frankly, "our grandfathers and great grandfathers were wont to contemplate the earth alone, solicitous only to see whether the plain afforded grass and water for their horses. They never troubled themselves about what went on in the Heavens, and who was the creator and governour of the stars."

I have observed the Abipones, when they are unable to comprehend any thing at first sight, soon grow weary of examining it, and cry *orqueenàm?* what is it after all? Sometimes the Guaranies, when completely puzzled, knit their brows and cry *tupâ oiquaà*, God knows what it is. Since they possess such small reasoning powers, and have so little inclination to exert them, it is no wonder that they are neither able nor willing to argue one thing from another.

You cannot imagine in what dark colours the Europeans, who first entered these provinces, described the stupidity of the Americans. Brother Thomas Ortiz, afterwards Bishop of Sta. Martha, intimates in his letters to the Court of Madrid, that the Americans are foolish, dull, stupid, and unreasoning like beasts, that they are incapable of understanding the heads of religion, and devoid of human sense and judgement. Some of the Spaniards thought the Americans so stupid, that they wished to exclude them, even after they were grown up, from baptism, confession, and other

sacraments, as being in the condition of infants who are not yet possessed of reason. Paul the Third was obliged to issue a bull, in the year 1537, the second of June, by which he pronounced the Indians to be really men, and capable of understanding the Catholic faith, and receiving the sacraments, the cause of the Indians being pleaded by Bartolomeo De las Casas, afterwards Bishop of Chiapa. The pontifical decree begins *Vetitas ipsa*, and is extant in Harold. Notwithstanding this, "the adult Indians in Peru, who have been baptized and properly confessed, do not partake of the divine communion once every year, nor indeed when on the point of death," as Acosta says in the eighth chapter of his work: *De procuranda Indorum Salute*. Nor did the exhortations and comminations of the famous councils at Lima procure the Indians permission to partake of the eucharist, as appears from the complaints and decrees of the synods held in the next century at Lima, Plata, Arequipa, Paza, and Paraguay. For the priests, who denied the eucharist, always alleged the stupidity, ignorance, and inveterate wickedness of the Indians in their excuse. But the synod held at Paza in the year 1638, was of opinion that this ignorance of the Indians should be ascribed to the negligence of their pastors, by whose sedulous instruction these wretches might have emerged from the native darkness of their minds, and from the slough of wickedness.

Taught by the experience of eighteen years spent amongst the Guaranies, and Abipones, I profess to hold the same opinion, having myself seen most barbarous savages born in the woods, accustomed from their earliest age to superstition, slaughter, and rapine, and naturally dull and stupid as brutes, who, after their removal to the colonies of the Jesuits, by daily instruction and by the example of old converts, became well acquainted with and attached to the divine law. Although the Americans are but slow of understanding, yet when the good sense of the teacher compensates for the stupidity of his pupils, they are successfully converted to civilization and piety, and even instructed in arts of all kinds. If you wish to see, with your own eyes, to what a degree instruction sharpens the wits of the Indians, and enlarges their comprehensions, go and visit the Guarany towns; in all of which you will find Indians well skilled in the making and handling of musical instruments, in painting, sculpture, cabinet-making, working metals of every kind, weaving, architecture, and writing; and some who can construct clocks, bells, gold clasps, &c. according to all the rules of art. Moreover, there were many who printed books, even of a large size, not only in their native tongue, but in the Latin language, with brass types, which they made themselves. They also write books with a pen so artfully, that the most discerning European would swear they were printed. The Bishops, Governours, and other visitants, were astonished at the workmanship of the Indians, which they saw or heard of in the Guarany towns. The Guaranies were instructed in music, and other arts, by the Jesuit Missionaries, Italians, Flemings, and Germans, who found the Indians docile beyond their expectation. Of this, however, I am perfectly certain, that the Indians comprehend what they see sooner and more easily than what they hear, like the rest of mankind, who are all more readily instructed by the eyes than by the ears. If you desire a Guarany to paint or engrave any thing, place a copy before his eyes, and he will imitate it and execute his task with accuracy and elegance. If a pattern be wanting, and the Indian be left to his own devices, he will produce nothing but stupid bungling work, though you may have endeavoured to explain your wishes to him as fully as possible. Neither should you imagine that the Americans are deficient in memory. It was an old custom in the Guarany Reductions to make the chief Indian of the town, or one of the magistrates, repeat the sermon just delivered from the pulpit before the people in the street, or in the court-yard of our house; and they almost all did it with the utmost fidelity, without missing a sentence. Any piece of music which they have either sung or played on the flute, or organ, two or three times from note, becomes so infixed in their memory, that if the music paper were carried away by the wind, they would have no further occasion for it. From these things a theologian will infer that the thinking powers of the Abipones are not circumscribed by such narrow limits as to render them incapable of knowing, or at least suspecting the existence of a God, the creator and governour of all things, from the sight of the things created. The nation of the

Guaranies, though formerly very ferocious, knew the supreme Deity, whom they call *Tupâ*, a word composed of two particles, *tû*, a word of admiration, and *pâ*, of interrogation.

I said that the Abipones were commendable for their wit and strength of mind; but, ashamed of my too hasty praise, I retract my words, and pronounce them fools, idiots, and madmen. Lo! this is the proof of their insanity! They are unacquainted with God, and with the very name of God, yet affectionately salute the evil spirit, whom they call *Aharaigichi*, or *Queevêt*, with the title of grandfather, *Groaperikie*. Him they declare to be their grandfather, and that of the Spaniards, but with this difference, that to the latter he gives gold and silver, and fine clothes, but that to them he transmits valour; for they account themselves more courageous and intrepid than any of the Spaniards. Should you ask them what their grandfather formerly was, and of what condition, they will confess themselves utterly ignorant on the subject. If you persist in your interrogations, they will declare this grandfather of theirs to have been an Indian – so barren and absurd is their theology. The Abipones think the Pleiades to be the representation of their grandfather; and as that constellation disappears at certain periods from the sky of South America, upon such occasions, they suppose that their grandfather is sick, and are under a yearly apprehension that he is going to die: but as soon as those seven stars are again visible in the month of May, they welcome their grandfather, as if returned and restored from sickness, with joyful shouts, and the festive sound of pipes and trumpets, congratulating him on the recovery of his health. *Quemen naachic latenc! layàm nauichi enà? Ta yegàm! Layamini!* What thanks do we owe thee! and art thou returned at last? Ah! thou hast happily recovered! – With such exclamations, expressive of their joy and their folly, do they fill the air. Next day they all go out to seek honey to make mead, and, as soon as that is prepared, they assemble in one place, at the setting of the sun, to make public demonstration of gladness. They pass the night, the married Abipones sitting on the ground on skins, the by-standing women singing with a loud voice, and the crowd of single persons laughing and applauding, by the light of torches, which shine here and there about the market-place. Some female juggler, who conducts the festive ceremonies, dances at intervals, rattling a gourd full of hardish fruit-seeds to musical time, and, whirling round to the right with one foot, and to the left with another, without ever removing from one spot, or in the least varying her motions. This foolish crazy dance is interrupted every now and then by the horrid clangor of military trumpets, in which the spectators join, making a loud noise by striking their lips with their hands. Yet in the midst of all this you can never perceive the smallest deviation from strict decorum. The men are decently separated from the women; the boys from the girls. The female dancer, the priestess of these ridiculous ceremonies, as a mark of particular favour, rubs the thighs of some of the men with her gourds, and, in the name of their grandfather, promises them swiftness in pursuing enemies and wild beasts. At the same time the new male and female jugglers, who are thought equal to the office, are initiated with many ceremonies. Of this most mischievous description of men I am now going to treat more fully.

## CHAPTER IX. OF THE CONJURORS, OR RATHER OF THE JUGGLERS AND CHEATS OF THE ABIPONES

If I remember rightly, no nation which has been discovered in Paraguay is without its jugglers, whom the Abipones call by the name of the devil, *Keebèt*, or devilish workers, because they believe them to have received from their grandfather, the evil spirit, the power of performing wonderful work far surpassing human art. These rogues, who are of both sexes, profess to know and have the ability to do all things. There is not one of the savages who does not believe that it is in the power of these conjurors to inflict disease and death, to cure all disorders, to make known distant and future events; to cause rain, hail, and tempests; to call up the shades of the dead, and consult them concerning hidden matters; to put on the form of a tiger; to handle every kind of serpent without danger, &c., which powers, they imagine, are not obtained by art, but imparted to certain persons by their grandfather, the devil. Those who aspire to the office of juggler are said to sit upon an aged willow, overhanging some lake, and to abstain from food for several days, till they begin to see into futurity. It always appeared probable to me that these rogues, from long fasting, contract a weakness of brain, a giddiness, and kind of delirium, which makes them imagine that they are gifted with superior wisdom, and give themselves out for magicians. They impose upon themselves first, and afterwards upon others. But in reality they differ from the rest in nothing but the superior ability of concerting frauds to deceive others. Indeed it is no difficult matter to cheat ignorant and credulous savages, who account every new thing, which they have never seen before, a prodigy, and immediately attribute it to magic art. Once when I happened to make some roses of red linen, to adorn the church, the Indians watched me at my work with much interest, wondering at this imitation of nature, and exclaiming, "This father is either a magician, or the son of a witch." A European lay-brother of our order astonished the Indians by turning something of wood, with much skill and expedition, and was consequently spoken of by them all as the prince of magicians; for till that day they had never seen a turning machine, nor any thing turned. Were they to behold fireworks, optical glasses, the experiments of the air-pump, and many other things which are every-day sights amongst Europeans, amazed at what would be so novel to their eyes, they would indeed swear them to be absolute proofs of magical art. This is confirmed by the circumstance of the Brazilians calling their conjurors *Payè*, and the art of working miracles *Caraybà*, which name they afterwards gave to the European strangers, because they saw them perform things by art which, being formerly unknown to them, they imagined above the powers of nature. Hence also the Guaranies, whose language bears much resemblance to that of Brazil, at this day call all the Spaniards and Europeans *Carayè*.

This simplicity of an ignorant people, the crafty jugglers know well how to turn to their own advantage, openly boasting themselves vicegerents and interpreters of the devil, their grandfather; diviners of future events; priests of the mysteries; creators, or, as they please, healers of diseases; necromancers, and governours of all the elements; easily persuading these credulous creatures any thing that comes into their heads. They are furnished with a thousand arts of deceiving. Suppose they have heard from some savage visitant that an enemy is coming to attack the horde; this knowledge they will boast of to their hordesmen as if it had been revealed to them by their grandfather, thus acquiring the reputation of prophets. Whatever they learn either from conjecture, from secret intelligence, or from their own examination, they predict to be about to happen with infinite pomposity, and are always listened to with as much attention as if they were actually inspired. Should their prophecies not be approved by the event, they are never at a loss for excuses to shelter their authority. Sometimes, in the dead of the night, they suddenly announce the enemy's approach with a whistle or a pipe. All are awakened, and without once calling in question the truth of the juggler's prediction, fly to arms. The

women and children betake themselves to a place of safety, and whilst they pass hours, nay whole nights, in the fear of death, and their husbands in threatening it to the assailants, not one of the enemy makes his appearance. But that the faith in their prophecies, and the authority of the prophets, may suffer no diminution, they declare, with a smile, that the hostile assault has been averted by their grandfather the devil. At other times a body of enemies often rushes upon them on a sudden, when not one of these prophets has either foreseen or foretold the danger of an attack. A ridiculous event, à propos to this subject, occurs to my recollection. About night-fall an Abiponian boy brought an iron bridle, an axe, and some other trifles, the treasures of his family, to be guarded in my house. On being asked the reason of his doing so, he replied that the enemies would arrive in the night; for so it had been predicted by his mother, a famous juggler, who declared that whenever the enemy was approaching, she felt a pricking sensation in her left arm. "Oh!" replied I, "you may attribute that to the fleas, my good lad. I can tell you this on my own experience. Day and night I feel my left and my right arm too, as well as other parts of my body, insolently pricked and stung by fleas. If that were an indication of the enemy, we should never be free from their attacks night or day." But my words were vain; for the report of the old woman's presage got abroad, and disturbed the whole town all night. Yet, as often happened, no sign or vestige of the enemy appeared.

The Abipones, whom the desire of booty or glory induces to be constantly scheming war against others, are, in consequence, never free from suspicions of machinations against themselves. The more ardently they desire to take measures for their safety, the more readily do they believe themselves in danger from others, and generally for some foolish reason. A light rumour, smoke seen from a distance, strange foot-marks, or the unseasonable barking of dogs, fills them with suspicions that their lives are in danger from the enemy, especially when they dread their vengeance for slaughters which themselves have lately committed. The task of tranquillizing and preparing their minds devolves upon the jugglers, who, whenever any thing is to be feared, or any thing to be done, consult the evil spirit. About the beginning of the night a company of old women assemble in a huge tent. The mistress of the band, an old woman remarkable for wrinkles and grey hairs, strikes every now and then two large discordant drums, at intervals of four sounds, and whilst these instruments return a horrible bellowing, she, with a harsh voice, mutters kinds of songs, like a person mourning. The surrounding women, with their hair dishevelled and their breasts bare, rattle gourds, and loudly chaunt funeral verses, which are accompanied by a continual motion of the feet, and tossing about of the arms. But this infernal music is rendered still more insupportable by other performers, who keep constantly beating pans which are covered with deers' skin, and sound very acutely, with a stick. In this manner the night is passed. At day-break all flock to the old woman's tent, as to a Delphic oracle. The singers receive little presents, and are anxiously asked what their grandfather has said. The replies of the old women are generally of such doubtful import, that whatever happens they may seem to have predicted the truth. Sometimes the devil is consulted by different women, in different tents, the same night. At day-break one party will pertinaciously assert that the enemy are on the approach, which the other as obstinately denying, a conflict of opinions ensues between these foolish interpreters of oracles, which generally ends in a bloody quarrel. Sometimes one of the jugglers is desired to call up the shade of a dead man, from which they may immediately learn what their fates reserve for them. A promiscuous multitude of every age and sex flocks to the necromancer's tent. The juggler is concealed beneath a bulls hide, which serves in the same manner as a stage-curtain. Having muttered a few extemporary verses, sometimes with a mournful, at others with a commanding voice, he at length declares that the shade of such a person, whoever the people choose, is present. Him he interrogates over and over again on future events, and, changing his voice, answers to himself whatever he thinks proper. Not one of the auditors dares to doubt of the presence of the shade, or the truth of its words. An Abipon of noble family and good understanding, used many arguments to convince me that he had with his own eyes beheld the spirit of an Indian woman, whose husband was then living in our town. Spaniards also, who have lived from boyhood in captivity amongst the Abipones, are quite persuaded that the

shades of the dead become visible at the call of a necromancer, that they reply to questions, and that there is no deceit used in the business. But what sensible man would credit such witnesses, who are in the daily habit of deceiving and being deceived?

But from this custom of the savages of calling up the shades of the dead, we may deduce that they believe in the immortality of the soul, as may also be collected both from their rites and conversation. They place a pot, a garment, arms, and horses, fastened on stakes upon graves, that the dead may not be in want of the daily necessaries of life. They have an idea, that those little ducks, which the Abipones call *ruililiè*, and which fly about in flocks at night, uttering a mournful hiss, are the souls of the departed. The Spaniard Raphael de los Rios, who superintended the estate belonging to the town of St. Jeronymo, was cruelly murdered in his tent, in an assault of the savages, whilst I resided there. Some months after, an Abiponian catechumen came and anxiously enquired whether all the Spaniards went to Heaven when they died, and was told by my companion that those who had closed their lives with a pious death alone obtained this happiness. "I agree entirely with you," said the Abipon; "for the Spaniard Raphael, who was killed here lately, seems not to have gained admittance yet; our countrymen say that they see him riding in the plain every night, and hissing in a mournful tone." This, though to be accounted either a mere fabrication, or the effect of fancy, justifies the conclusion, that the savages believe the soul to survive the body, though they are entirely ignorant of what becomes of it, or what may be its fate. The other people of Paraguay too hold the same opinion of the immortality of the soul.

From what I have said of the jugglers, who does not see that all their knowledge, all their arts, consist of nothing but cunning, fraud, and deceit? Yet the savages yield them the readiest faith and obedience during their lifetime, and after their death revere them as divine men. In their migrations, they reverently carry with them their bones and other reliques as sacred pledges. Whenever the Abipones see a fiery meteor, or hear it thunder three or four times, these simpletons believe that one of their jugglers is dead, and that this thunder and lightning are his funeral obsequies. If they ride out any where to hunt or fight, they are always accompanied on their journey by one of these knaves, on whose words and advice they fully depend, believing that he knows and can foretel whatever may conduce to the success of the expedition; he teaches them the place, time, and manner proper for attacking wild beasts or the enemy. On an approaching combat, he rides round the ranks, striking the air with a palm bough, and with a fierce countenance, threatening eyes, and affected gesticulations, imprecates evil on their enemies. This ceremony they think of much avail to securing them a victory. The best part of the spoils are adjudged to him as the fruits of his office. I observed that these crafty knaves have plenty of excellent horses, and domestic furniture superior to that of the rest. Whatever they wish for they extort from this credulous people. The Abipones account it a crime to contradict their words, or oppose their desires or commands, fearing their vengeance. When any of the jugglers are ill disposed towards a man, they call him to their house, and are instantly obeyed. When he is come, they harshly reproach him for some imaginary fault or injury, and declare their intention of punishing him in the name of their grandfather. They order him instantly to bare his breast and shoulders, and then pierce and tear his flesh with the jaw of the fish *palometa*. The poor wretch dares not utter the least complaint, though streaming with blood, and thinks himself very fortunate in being suffered to depart alive.

At another time, when these bugbears think any one inimical or injurious to them, they will threaten to change themselves into a tiger, and tear every one of their hordesmen to pieces. No sooner do they begin to imitate the roaring of a tiger, than all the neighbours fly away in every direction. From a distance however they hear the feigned sounds. "Alas! his whole body is beginning to be covered with tiger spots!" cry they. "Look, his nails are growing," the fear-struck women exclaim, although they cannot see the rogue, who is concealed within his tent; but that distracted fear presents things to their eyes which have no real existence. It was scarce possible to persuade them out of their absurd terrors. "You daily kill tigers in the plain," said I, "without dread, why then should you weakly

fear a false imaginary tiger in the town?" "You Fathers don't understand these matters," they reply, with a smile. "We never fear, but kill tigers in the plain, because we can see them. Artificial tigers we do fear, because they can neither be seen nor killed by us." I combated this poor argument, by saying, "If that artificial tiger which your conjurors assume to alarm you cannot be seen, how, pray, can you tell that tigers' claws and nails begin to grow upon him?" But it was vain to reason with men in whom the extreme pertinacity with which they adhered to the opinion of their ancestors superseded all reason. Should a furious tempest arise, they will all declare the deluge caused by profuse rain to be effected by the arts of the jugglers, and whilst some attribute the flood and hurricane to one, some to another, a still more furious and louder tempest arises amongst themselves. Hear my account of an event which I cannot remember without laughter. In the month of January, a quantity of heavy rain fell in the night, and precipitating itself from a neighbouring hill, nearly overwhelmed the colony of St. Jeronymo. The immense force of waters broke the leathern door, rushed into my hut where I was sleeping, and not immediately gaining egress, increased to about five palms in depth. Awakened by the noise, I put my arms out of bed, and using them as a plumb, measured the depth of the water; and had not the wall, which was perforated by the flood, opened a way to the waters, I must have been obliged to swim for my life. The same thing happened to all the Abipones who dwelt on low ground, their huts being entirely inundated. But lo! the next morning a report was spread, that a female juggler, who had received some offence from one of the inhabitants of the town, had caused this great storm in the intent of drowning the whole horde, but that the clouds had been repulsed, the rain stopped, and the town saved by the interposition of another juggler. That dreadful flood did not extend to the neighbouring plain, where Pariekaikin, at that time chief of the Abiponian jugglers, was then living with some companions, who, after a long drought, were very desirous of getting water. This Pariekaikin in an oracular manner declared, that Father Joseph Brigniel had caused that rain for the advantage of his town, and that because he, Pariekaikin, did not choose to reside there, he had, out of revenge, directed the clouds with such art, that not a drop of rain reached his station. For they made no hesitation in accounting that Father a conjuror, because he happily and speedily healed the sick.

That the American jugglers enjoy familiar intercourse with the evil spirit is not only firmly believed by the ignorant savages, but some writers have even endeavoured to persuade Europe to believe it. For my part, after so long an acquaintance with these nations I could never bring myself to credit it, always remaining of opinion that they neither know, nor are capable of performing any thing above human powers. Being firmly persuaded that they would do me all the evil in their power, I often accosted them in a friendly manner, and by all sorts of good offices endeavoured to prevail upon them to alter their manner of life, and embrace religion; for by their example almost all the rest would regulate their conduct. But this was like washing the blackamoor white: for these wickedest of mortals, unwilling to part with their authority and lucrative office, left no stone unturned, no frauds unattempted to deter and intimidate their countrymen from going to church, attending to the instructions of the priests, and receiving baptism, daily denouncing death, and destruction on the whole nation, unless they obeyed. Nor is this either new or surprizing. In all the American nations the teachers of the holy religion have found the jugglers upholders of ancient superstition, and rocks in the way of the desired progress of the Christian law. Good heavens! what contests, and what trouble did they not cause to Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, the famous Guarany missionary! It was not till he had repressed the authority of the remaining jugglers, and commanded the bones of the dead ones, which were universally worshipped with great honours, to be burnt in the presence of the people, that he converted an infinite number of savages to the Christian religion, and induced them to enter colonies. Till these knavish *holophants*, and sycophants to speak with Plautus, are abolished, nothing can be done with the savages; this I affirm on experience. The town of St. Joachim not only merited the praise of religion, but produced many fruits of genuine piety. But as snakes often lurk in the grass, and tares in the most abundant harvest, an old Indian secretly performed the office of juggler there, and suffered himself to be adored as a divine person by some foolish women, whom he served in

the double capacity of physician, and prophet, at the same time carrying on a criminal intercourse with them. These things were disclosed to me by Ignatius Paranderi, chief Cacique of the town; so that judging it advisable immediately to reprove this mischievous old man in public, since private admonitions were of no avail, I repaired to his house attended by all the chief people of the place; and imitating, in this important business, the thundering tongue of Cicero when he fulminated against Catiline, addressed him in the following manner. "How long, accursed old man, will you belie your profession of Christianity, by daring to corrupt the morals of your fellow-hordesmen with nefarious arts, and indecent conduct? After living near twenty years in the school of Christ, are you not afraid to practise savage rites the most repugnant to Christian laws? Your manner of life is exactly suitable to the name of tiger, (he was called Yaguetè, which means a tiger;) for by your deceits and indecencies you tear the poor little sheep of Christ. Extreme age has conducted you to the goal of life; – unless you repent, what a wretched death, and when dead what a sad fate awaits you! I am equally ashamed and grieved on your account. He whom you behold dead on the cross for you," said I, showing him a crucifix, "will drive you headlong into hell, to punish your perfidy. Be what you appear, or appear what you are. Regulate your conduct according to divine law. But if savage superstitions are too firmly rooted in your breast to be ever eradicated, return instantly to the woods of the savages, to the dens of wild beasts where you first saw the light, that your example may not pervert the rest of your hordesmen, who have dedicated their lives to religion and virtue. Go, and repent of your former sins, and by penitence and innocence of life, cleanse away the stains of them. If you do not instantly obey my friendly admonitions, it will be worse for you. Henceforward, you shall not go unpunished. Know, that as soon as ever I hear of any act of superstition or indecency committed or attempted by you, at my orders you shall be led about the streets amidst the hisses of the people, and pelted with cowdung, by a crowd of boys. Such is my firm determination. This is the thyme and frankincense that shall be offered up to the stinking divinity, which you have madly dared to arrogate to yourself and suffered to be adored." This commination left the old fellow alarmed, and, if I mistake not, corrected, all good men highly approving the severity of my speech. No suspicions were ever after entertained of him, though I inspected all things with a vigilant eye and an attentive ear.

As the jugglers perform the offices not only of soothsayers and physicians, but also of priests of the ceremonies of superstition, it exceeds belief what absurd opinions they inculcate into the ignorant minds of the Abipones. Out of many, I will mention a few. The Abipones think that none of their nation would ever die, were the Spaniards and the jugglers banished from America; for they attribute every one's death, from whatever cause it may proceed, either to the malicious arts of the one, or to the fire-arms of the other. If an Abipon die from being pierced with many wounds, or from having his bones broken, or his strength exhausted by extreme old age, his countrymen all deny that wounds or weakness occasioned his death, and anxiously try to discover by which of the jugglers, and for what reason he was killed. Because they have remembered some of their nation to have lived for a hundred years, they imagine that they would never die, were it not for the jugglers and the Spaniards. What ridiculous ideas do not the Americans entertain respecting the eclipse of the sun and moon! During the time it lasts, the Abipones fill the air with horrid lamentations. They perpetually cry *tayretà!* oh! the poor little thing! grieving for the sun and moon: for when these planets are obscured, they always fear that they are entirely extinguished. Still more ridiculous are the Chiquito Indians, who say that the sun and moon are cruelly torn by dogs, with which they think that the air abounds, when they see their light fail; attributing their blood red colour to the bites of these animals. Accordingly, to defend their dear planets from those aerial mastiffs, they send a shower of arrows up into the sky, amid loud vociferations, at the time of the eclipse. But, who would believe that the Peruvian Indians, so much more civilized than the rest, should be foolish enough to imagine, that when the sun is obscured, he is angry, and turns away his face from them, on account of certain crimes which they have committed? When the moon is in darkness, they say she is sick, and are in perpetual apprehension, that, when she dies, her immense carcass will fall down upon the earth and crush all the inhabitants. When she

recovers her light, they say she has been healed by Pachacámac, the Saviour of the world, who has prevented her death, that the earth may not be utterly crushed and destroyed by her weight. Other crazy notions are entertained by other Americans concerning eclipses. The Abipones call a comet *neyàc*, the Guaranies *yacitatà tatatibae*, the smoking star: for what we name the hair, beard, or tail of a comet, they take to be smoke. This star is dreaded by all savages, being accounted the forerunner and instrument of various calamities. The Peruvians have always believed the comet to portend the death of their kings, and the destruction of their provinces and kingdoms. Montezuma, monarch of the Mexicans, having frequently beheld a comet like a fiery pyramid, visible from midnight till sun-set, was greatly alarmed for himself and for his people, and shortly after conquered and slain by Cortez.

Let us now return to the superstitions of the Abipones, who think another star, the name of which I have forgotten, portentous, formidable, and destructive. They say that those years in which this star has been seen have always proved bloody and disastrous to their nation. When a whirlwind drives the dust round in a circle, the women throw ashes in its way, that it may be satisfied with that food, and may turn in some other direction. But if the wind rushes into any house with that impetuous whirling, they are certain that one of the inhabitants will die soon. If any live bees be found in the honey-comb, which they bring from the woods, they say that they must be killed out of doors, imagining, that if this be done within the house, they shall never be able to find any more honey.

The Abipones labour under many superstitions, because they abound in jugglers, the teachers of superstition. The most famous at the time that I lived there, were Hanetrâin, Nahagalkin, Oaikin, Kaëperlahachin, Pazanoirin, Kaachì, Kepakainkin, Laamamin, and Pariekaikin, the first, and by far the most eminent of them all, who had obtained a high reputation for his prophecies and other peculiarities of his office. Female jugglers abound to such a degree, that they almost out-number the gnats of Egypt. Their chief endeavour is to inspire their countrymen with a veneration for their grandfather, the evil spirit. On this subject I shall now proceed to discourse.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONJECTURES WHY THE ABIPONES TAKE THE EVIL SPIRIT FOR THEIR GRANDFATHER, AND THE PLEIADES FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF HIM

When you read that the Abipones take the devil for their grandfather, you may laugh with me at their folly, and behold their madness with pity and wonder, but, if you be wise, let all this be done in moderation, for still grosser errors have been entertained amongst many nations civilized by laws and arts both human and divine. If you do but look into history sacred or profane, you will allow that there is scarce any thing to which divine honours have not formerly been paid. Such madness and folly in many polished nations should so exhaust our indignation and wonder as to make us judge mildly of the savage Abipones, educated amongst wild beasts, and unacquainted with letters, if they simply dignify the evil spirit with the title of their grandfather, without giving him the name or honours of a divinity. During a seven-years' residence amongst the savages, I never discovered any thing of that nature. If secretly or in our absence they did any thing which a divine would condemn, I think it proceeded from no religious inclination towards the evil spirit, but only from fear of him, and from the compulsion used by the jugglers; so that they rather merit the imputation of stupidity than of blasphemy.

Not only the Abipones, but likewise the Mocobios, Tobas, Yapitalakas, Guaycurus and other equestrian people of Chaco, boast themselves grandsons of the evil spirit, partakers no less of their superstition than of their madness. But how different are the opinions entertained by the southern equestrian tribes, who wander up and down the region of Magellan! They are all acquainted with the devil, whom they call Balichù. They believe that there is an innumerable crowd of demons, the chief of whom they name El El, and all the inferior ones Quezubû. They think, however, every kind of demon hostile and mischievous to the human race, and the origin of all evil, regarding them in consequence with dread and abhorrence. The Puelches, Picunches, or Moluches, are unacquainted even with the name of God. These last ascribe all the good things they either possess or desire to the sun, and to the sun they pray for them. When a priest of our order told them that God, the creator of all things, and amongst the rest of the sun, should be worshipped before the work of his own hands, they replied; "Till this hour, we never knew nor acknowledged any thing greater or better than the sun." The Patagonians call God Soychè, to wit, that which cannot be seen, which is worthy of all veneration, and which does not live in the world; hence they call the dead *Soychuhèt*, men that dwell with God beyond the world. They seem to hold two principles in common with the Gnostics and Manichæans, for they say that God created both good and evil demons. The latter they greatly fear, but never worship. They believe every sick person to be possessed of an evil demon; hence their physicians always carry a drum with figures of devils painted on it, which they strike at the beds of sick persons, to drive the evil demon, which causes the disorder, from the body. The savages of Chili are ignorant of the name and worship of God, but believe in a certain aerial spirit, called Pillan, to whom they address supplications that he will scatter their enemies, and thanksgiving, amidst their cups, after gaining a victory. Pillan is also their name for thunder, and they worship this deity chiefly when it thunders. The devil, which they call Alveè, they detest with their whole hearts. Hence, as they think life the best of all things, when any of them dies, they say that the evil spirit has taken him away. The Brazilians and Guaranies call the devil Aña, or Añanga, and fear him on account of a thousand noxious arts by which he is signalized. In Virginia, the savages call the devil Okè, and pay him divine honours. Since numerous and neighbouring savages regard the devil with fear and contempt, I cannot imagine why the Abipones give him the affectionate and honourable appellation of their grandfather. But there is no need of reason and argument to induce the savages to embrace the absurdest opinions,

and to take what is doubtful for certain, what is false for perfectly true. The lies of a crafty juggler, the dreams of a foolish old woman, listened to with attentive ears, are more than enough to make them swear that the devil is their grandfather, or any thing still more absurd.

Why they believe the Pleiades to be the representation of their grandfather, remains to be discussed. On this subject also I can advance nothing but conjecture, nor can any thing certain be derived either from the Abipones or from the historians of America. The seven daughters of Lycurgus were placed by Jove amongst the stars, because they educated Bacchus in the island of Naxos, and distinguished by the name of Pleiades, as poets feign. What if we say that the Abipones, who are so fond of drinking-parties, worshipped those stars, because they were the nurses of Bacchus? But this pleasant idea would suit conversation better than history. It deserves attention, that, though various nations have paid divine honours to the sun, moon, and other stars, we cannot find a syllable respecting the worship of the Pleiades in any part of holy writ; unless, indeed, you say that they were adored by those nations mentioned in the 17th Chap. and the 3d verse of Deuteronomy: "That they go and serve other Gods, and worship them, the sun and moon, and all the host of heaven." For, as St. Jerome observes, the "whole host of heaven" means all the stars, including, of course, the Pleiades amongst the rest.

After long and frequent consideration of these things, it appears most probable to my mind, that the savages of Paraguay derived the knowledge and worship of the Pleiades from the ancient Peruvians; who, although they venerated God the creator and preserver of all things, (under the name of Pachacamac,) are nevertheless said to have adored the sea, rocks, trees, and, what is of most importance to the present subject, the Pleiades, whom they called Colcà. The Inca Manco Capac, their ruler and chief lawgiver, afterwards substituted new superstitions for old ones. He decreed, that divine honours should be paid to the sun. To it alone divine veneration and sacrifices were paid, though the moon also, which they call the consort of the sun, and certain stars, which they call the handmaids of the moon, were honoured with silver altars and adoration to a certain extent, but inferior to that paid a divinity. Amongst the stars they thought the Pleiades worthy of a distinguished place, and chief honour, either from the wonderful manner in which they are placed, or from their singular brightness. After the Spaniards obtained dominion over Peru by force of arms, it is credible that the Peruvians, to avoid this dreadful slavery, stole away wherever they could, and that many of them migrated into the neighbouring Tucuman, and thence, for the sake of security, into the deserts of Chaco, close by; where, amongst other superstitions they may have taught the inhabitants a religious observance of the Pleiades. But since the Abipones, you will object, cannot even express the name of God in their native tongue, and respectfully address the evil spirit by the title of their grandfather, why did they not learn from the Peruvians the name and worship of God, with a hatred and contempt for the evil spirit? The latter certainly entertained such a reverence for the God Pachacamac, that they thought it a part of their religion not to utter his name except on very important occasions, and whenever they did, to accompany the mention of it with great marks of reverence. On the other hand, they held the devil, whom they called Cupay, in much contempt. Why did not the Peruvians impart that reverence for God, and contempt for the evil spirit to the Abipones, at the same time that they instructed them in a religious observance of the Pleiades? Because vice is more easily learnt than virtue, as healthy persons are sooner infected by the sick, than sick ones cured by the healthy. Yet, if you persist in denying that the knowledge of the Pleiades was brought from Peru, I will oppose you no longer; but what hinders us from believing that it crept into Paraguay from the neighbouring Brazil, where the Tapuyas, formerly a fierce and numerous nation, greatly venerated the rise of the Pleiades, and worshipped those stars as divinities with singing and dancing. As no memorials are at hand from which any thing determinate can be elicited on this subject, I have thought fit to adduce all these conjectures, opinions, and probabilities which may seem in any way to relate to the evil spirit, the infamous grandfather of the Abipones, and to the Pleiades the representation of him.

## **CHAPTER XI. OF THE DIVISION OF THE ABIPONIAN NATION, OF THEIR PAUCITY, AND OF THE CHIEF CAUSES THEREOF**

To look for policy in savages will appear to you like seeking a knot in a bulrush, or expecting water from a flint. The Abipones, a nation obstinately attached to their ancient liberty, lived at their own pleasure, impatient of all controul. Their own will was their sole law. Nevertheless, as bees, ants, and every kind of animal, by natural instinct, observe certain peculiarities of their species, in like manner the most ferocious Indians pertinaciously retain, even to this day, certain customs, the ordinances of their nation, handed down to them by their ancestors, and regarded by them as laws. I shall proceed to treat of the political, economical, and military regulations of the Abipones, of their customs and magistrates.

The whole nation of the Abipones is divided into three classes: the Riikahès, who inhabit extensive plains; the Nakaigetergehes, who love the lurking-holes of the woods; and lastly, the Yaaucanigas, who were formerly a distinct nation, and used a separate language. In the last century, the Spaniards, whom they had gone out to slaughter, surprized them by the way, and almost destroyed them all. A few who survived the massacre, with the widows and children of the slain, joined the neighbouring Abipones, and both nations, by inter-marriages, coalesced into one; the old language of the Yaaucanigas falling into disuse. The Abiponian tribes pursue the same manner of life, and their customs and language, with the exception of a few words, are alike. Wondrous unanimity, and a constant alliance in arms, reigned amongst them as long as they had to deal with the Spaniards, against whom, as against a mutual foe, they bear an innate hatred, and whose servitude they resist with united strength. But though bound by the ties of consanguinity and friendship, impatient of the smallest injury, they eagerly seize on any occasion of war, and frequently weaken each other with mutual slaughter.

Like the other American savages, some of the Abipones practise polygamy and divorce. Yet they are by no means numerous; the whole nation consisting of no more than five thousand people. Intestine skirmishes, excursions against the enemy, the deadly contagion of the measles and small-pox, and the cruelty of the mothers towards their offspring, have combined to render their number so small. Now learn the cause of this inhumanity in the women. The mothers suckle their children for three years, during which time they have no conjugal intercourse with their husbands, who, tired of this long delay, often marry another wife. The women, therefore, kill their unborn babes through fear of repudiation, sometimes getting rid of them by violent arts, without waiting for their birth. Afraid of being widows in the life-time of their husbands, they blush not to become more savage than tigresses. Mothers spare their female offspring more frequently than the males, because the sons, when grown up, are obliged to purchase a wife, whereas daughters, at an age to be married, may be sold to the bridegroom at almost any price.

From all this you may easily guess that the Abiponian nations abound more in women than in men, both because female infants are seldomer killed by their mothers, because the women never fall in battle as is the case with the men, and because women are naturally longer lived than men. Many writers make the mistake of attributing the present scanty population of America to the cruelty of the Spaniards, when they should rather accuse that of the infanticide mothers. We, who have grown old amongst the Abipones, should pronounce her a singularly good woman who brings up two or three sons. But the whole Abiponian nation contains so few such mothers, that their names might all be inscribed on a ring. I have known some who killed all the children they bore, no one either preventing

or avenging these murders. Such is the impunity with which crimes are committed when they become common, as if custom could excuse their impiety. The mothers bewail their children, who die of a disease, with sincere tears; yet they dash their new-born babes against the ground, or destroy them in some other way, with calm countenances. Europeans will scarce believe that such affection for their dead children can co-exist with such cruelty towards them while they are alive, but to us it is certain and indubitable. After our instructions, however, had engrafted a reverence for the divine law in the minds of the Abipones, the barbarity of the mothers gradually disappeared, and husbands, with joyful eyes, beheld their hands no longer stained with the blood of their offspring, but their arms laden with those dear pledges. These are the fruits and the triumphs of religion, which fills not only Heaven but earth with inhabitants. When polygamy and divorce, the iniquitous murdering of infants, and the liberty of spontaneous abortion were at length, by means of Christian discipline, abolished, the nation of the Abipones, within a few years, rejoiced to see itself enriched with incredible accessions of both sexes.

## CHAPTER XII. OF THE MAGISTRATES, CAPTAINS, CACIQUES, &c. OF THE ABIPONES, AND OF THEIR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

The Abipones do not acknowledge any prince who reigns with supreme power over the whole nation. They are divided into hordes, each of which is headed by a man, whom the Spaniards call *capitan*, or *cacique*, the Peruvians *curáca*, the Guaranies *aba rubicha*, and the Abipones *nelafeyràt*, or *capitâ*. This word *capitan* sounds very grand in the ears of the Americans. They think they are using a very honourable title when they call the God, or King of the Spaniards, *capitan latènc*, or *capitan guazù*, the great captain. By this word, indeed, they mean to designate not only supreme power, and eminent dignity, but also every kind of nobility. Sometimes miserable looking old women, wretchedly clothed, and rich only in wrinkles, to prevent us from thinking them of low birth, will say *aym capitâ*, I am a captain, I am noble. I was astonished at hearing the savages buried in the woods of Mbaeverà, and cut off from all intercourse with the Spaniards, address their caciques by the names of *Capitâ Roÿ*, *Capitâ Tupânchichu*, *Capitâ Veraripotschiritù*, neglecting their own word, *aba rubicha*; so universal and honourable is the title of captain amongst the savage nations. Should an Abipon meet a Spaniard dressed very handsomely, he would not hesitate to call him captain, though he might be of low rank, and distinguished by no dignity or nobility whatever. Moreover, in Paraguay, Spaniards of the lowest rank, who live in the country, are extremely ambitious of the title of captain, and if you do not call them so every now and then, will look angry, and refuse to do you any kind of service, even to give you a drop of water if you are ever so thirsty. The Christian Guaranies have the same foolish mania for titles. After having laboured hard for two or three years in the royal camps, they think themselves amply repaid for their toils and wounds, if, at the end of the expedition, they return to their colony honoured by the royal governour with the title and staff of a captain. At all times even when employed, barefoot, in building or agriculture, they ostentatiously hold the captain's staff in their hands. When they are carried to the grave, this wooden ensign is suspended from the bier. When a man is at the point of death, and just going to receive extreme unction, he puts on his military boots and spurs, takes his staff in his hand, and in this trim awaits the priest, and even approaching death, as if in the intent of frightening the grim spectre away. On the domestics' expressing their surprize at the unusual attire of the dying man, he sternly and gravely observes, that this is the manner in which it becomes a captain to die. Such is the signification and the honour attached to the word captain in America.

Amongst the Guaranies, who have embraced the Christian religion, in various colonies, the name and office of cacique is hereditary. When a cacique dies, his eldest son succeeds without dispute, whatever his talents or disposition may be. Amongst the Abipones, too, the eldest son succeeds, but only provided that he be of a good character, of a noble and warlike disposition, in short, fit for the office; for if he be indolent, ill-natured, and foolish in his conduct, he is set aside, and another substituted, who is not related to the former by any tie of blood. But to say the truth, the cacique elected by the Abipones has no cause for pride, nor he that is rejected for grief and envy. The name of cacique is certainly a high title amongst the Abipones, but it is more a burden than an honour, and often brings with it greater danger than profit. For they neither revere their cacique as a master, nor pay him tribute or attendance as is usual with other nations. They invest him neither with the authority of a judge, an arbitrator, or an avenger. Drunken men frequently kill one another; women quarrel, and often imbrue their hands in one another's blood; young men, fond of glory or booty, rob the Spaniards, to whom they had promised peace, of whole droves of horses, and sometimes secretly slay them: and the cacique, though aware of all these things, dares not say a word. If he were but to

rebuke them for these transgressions, which are reckoned amongst the merits, virtues, and victories of the savages, with a single harsh word, he would be punished in the next drinking-party with the fists of the intoxicated savages, and publicly loaded with insults, as a friend to the Spaniards, and a greater lover of ease than of his people. How often have Ychamenraikin, chief cacique of the Riikahes, and Narè, of the Yaaucanigas, experienced this! How often have they returned from a drinking-party with swelled eyes, bruised hands, pale cheeks, and faces exhibiting all the colours of the rainbow!

But although the Abipones neither fear their cacique as a judge, nor honour him as a master, yet his fellow-soldiers follow him as a leader and governour of the war, whenever the enemy is to be attacked or repelled. Some, however, refuse to follow him, for what Cæsar said of the German chiefs is applicable to the Abiponian cacique: *Authoritate suadendi magis, quam jubendi potestate audiat*. As soon as a report is spread of the danger of an hostile attack, the business of the cacique is to provide for the security of his people; to increase the store of weapons; to order the horses to be fetched from the distant pastures to safer places; to send out watchers by night, and scouts in every direction, to procure supplies from the neighbours, and to gain their alliance. When the enemy is to be attacked, he rides before his men, and occupies the front of the army he has raised, less solicitous about the numbers of the enemy, than the firmness of his troops: for as with birds, when one is shot, the rest fly away, in like manner the Abipones, alarmed at the deaths or wounds of a few of their fellow-soldiers, desert their leader, and escape on swift horses, wherever room for flight is afforded them, more anxious about their own safety than about obtaining a victory. Yet it must be acknowledged that this nation never wants its heroes. Many remain intrepid whilst their companions fall around them, and though pierced with wounds and streaming with blood, retain even in death the station where they fought. Desire of glory, ferocious study of revenge, or despair of escape, inspires the naturally fearful with courage, which a Lacedemonian would admire, and which Europe desires to see in her warriors.

Moreover, being lovers of liberty and roving, they choose to own no law, and bind themselves to their cacique by no oaths of fidelity. Without leave asked on their part, or displeasure evinced on his, they remove with their families whithersoever it suits them, and join some other cacique; and when tired of the second, return with impunity to the horde of the first. This is quite common, and a matter of surprize to no one that knows how fleeting is the faith, how mutable the will of the Indians. Should a report be spread by uncertain or suspicious authors, that the enemy are coming in a few days, it is enough. Numbers, dreading the loss of life more than of fame, will desert their cacique, and hasten with their families to some well-known retreats. Lest however they should be branded with the name of deserters and cowards, they say they are going out to hunt. Hence, whenever we priests had to defend the new colonies filled with savage assailants, and almost destitute of inhabitants to repel them, we generally made more use of craft and threats than of force. The danger, or the fear of it, being dissipated, these fugacious heroes at length came home, no one daring to accuse them of cowardice, though no one could be ignorant that fear prompted their departure, security their return.

Whenever a cacique determines upon undertaking an excursion, a public drinking-party is appointed. Heated with that luscious beverage, prepared from honey or the alfaroba, they zealously offer their services to the cacique, who invites them to war, sing triumph before the victory with festive vociferations, and, (who would believe it?) diligently execute when sober, what they promised in a state of intoxication. That love is kindled by love, as fire by fire, and that friends are gained by liberality, are trite proverbs in Europe, and have been experienced by us in our long commerce with the Abipones. A cacique who seldom gives a repulse will have numerous, obedient, and affectionate hordesmen. Kind words or looks, the marks of good-will, avail but little amongst the savages, unless accompanied with beneficence. They require at the cacique's hands whatever they take it into their heads to wish for, believing that his office obliges him to satisfy the petitions of all. If he denies them any thing, they say he is not a captain, or noble, and insolently bestow upon him the disgraceful appellation of wood-Indian — *Acami Lanařaik*. The cacique has nothing, either in his arms or his clothes, to distinguish him from a common man, except the peculiar oldness and shabbiness of them;

for if he appear in the street with new and handsome apparel, just taken out of his wife's loom, the first person he meets will boldly cry, Give me that dress, *Tach cauê grihilalgi*; and unless he immediately parts with it, he becomes the scoff and the scorn of all, and hears himself called covetous and niggardly. Sometimes, when they came to ask a great favour of me, they would stroke my shoulder, and say in a sweet tone, You are indeed a captain, Father; by which honourable appellation they wished me to understand that it was unlike a captain to refuse a man any thing. As those things which they asked me for were not always in my possession, nor could indeed be found in any shop at Amsterdam, I told them I was no captain, that they might bear a refusal with good humour, and attribute it to poverty, not to ill-nature. But it was all in vain. They construe a Father's excuse into a falsehood, and exclaim, not without much laughter on both sides, What a liar, what a miser you are! I found that those caciques had abundance of followers who were active and successful in the acquirement of booty, free from sordid avarice, and fond of displaying an unbounded liberality towards their hordesmen. Kaapetraikin and Kebachin had crowds of soldiers in their service, because they were distinguished for dexterity and assiduity in depredation; the same men, when decrepit with extreme age, inadequate to undertaking excursions, and consequently poor, found none but relations continue in their hordes.

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