

never been able to make gunpowder, though they were at first very anxious to learn the secret of it. Having observed some negroes among the Spaniards, they supposed that gunpowder from its blackness, was extracted from their bodies. One of the negroes, having the misfortune to fall into their hands, gave them an opportunity of trying the experiment. He was first flayed from head to foot, and then burnt to cinders; but this chemical essay to their great surprise, proved a total failure. They have since imbibed a strong prejudice against fire-arms, and when they are taken from the Spaniards, little use is made of them.

The Abipones are a numerous and warlike tribe of Indians, Paraguay. They have never been subdued by the Spaniards, but maintain their independence to the present day. They lead a roaming life, and are engaged in frequent wars with their neighbors. They are a well-formed race, muscular, robust and active. They are particularly famous for their skill in managing horses, and may be considered a nation of cavalry. They have harassed the Spanish settlements ever since those unwelcome intruders came into their neighborhood, and, next to the Arancanians, have been the most formidable foes encountered by the Castilian invaders. The vast extent of country, bounded by the Rio Grande and the Paraguay, is occupied by the Abipones, who are divided into several hordes, each of which is headed by a chief, whom they call *capita*, a name borrowed from the Spaniards. This fact affords some evidence that their form of government or military tactics underwent some modification after the arrival of the strangers. Although they make common cause against the Spaniards, yet the different tribes are often involved in desperate wars with each other. Their numbers have been greatly diminished by these intestine hostilities, as well as by the measles and small pox. Their natural increase is also checked by a barbarous and unnatural custom, prevalent among the women, of killing their children.

No man can obtain celebrity among the Abipones, except by warlike prowess. Their arms are the bow and spear. The Abiponian spear is as long as a Macedonian pike, and is a most formidable weapon. It is pointed at both ends, so that if one is blunted in battle, the other may be immediately turned against the enemy. When going to fight, they grease the points, so that deeper wounds may be inflicted. They also possess a few nets, but have no skill in using them. They also use a weapon made of three stones, covered with leather, and fastened together by a thong; this they whirl round rapidly, and dart at an object with great precision. A hostile expedition is always preceded