

pomegranate, and date trees. We were assured, that these last were as little productive here as on the coast of Cumana. Although we had been made acquainted, from the narratives of many travellers, with the dragon-tree of the garden of M. Franqui, we were not the less struck with its enormous magnitude. We were told, that the trunk of this tree, which is mentioned in several very ancient documents as marking the boundaries of a field, was as gigantic in the fifteenth century as it is at the present time. Its height appeared to us to be about 50 or 60 feet; its circumference near the roots is 45 feet. We could not measure higher, but Sir George Staunton found that, 10 feet from the ground, the diameter of the trunk is still 12 English feet; which corresponds perfectly with the statement of Borda, who found its mean circumference 33 feet 8 inches, French measure. The trunk is divided into a great number of branches, which rise in the form of a candelabrum, and are terminated by tufts of leaves, like the yucca which adorns the valley of Mexico. This division gives it a very different appearance from that of the palm-tree.

Among organic creations, this tree is undoubtedly, together with the *Adansonia* or baobab of Senegal, one of the oldest inhabitants of our globe. The baobabs are of still greater dimensions than the dragon-tree of Orotava. There are some which near the root measure 34 feet in diameter, though their total height is only from 50 to 60 feet. But we should observe, that the *Adansonia*, like the ochroma, and all the plants of the family of bombax, grow much more rapidly* than the *dracæna*, the vegetation of which is very slow. That in M. Franqui's garden still bears every year

* It is the same with the plane-tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) which M. Michaux measured at Marietta, on the banks of the Ohio, and which, at twenty feet from the ground, was 15.7 feet in diameter.—“*Voyage à l'Ouest des Monts Alleghany*,” 1804, p. 93. The yew, chesnut, oak, plane-tree, deciduous cypress, bombax, mimosa, *cæsalpinia*, *hymenæa*, and *dracæna*, appear to me to be the plants which, in different climates, present specimens of the most extraordinary growth. An oak, discovered together with some Gallic helmets in 1809, in the turf pits of the department of the Somme, near the village of Yseux, seven leagues from Abbeville, was about the same size as the dragon-tree of Orotava. According to a memoir by M. Traullée, the trunk of this oak was 14 feet in diameter.