

is generally, in the port of Cumana, from 25·2° to 26·3°. The first plant we gathered on the continent of America was the *Avicennia tomentosa*,* which in this place scarcely reaches two feet in height. This shrub, together with the sesuvium, the yellow gomphrena, and the cactus, cover soil impregnated with muriate of soda; they belong to that small number of plants which live in society like the heath of Europe, and which in the torrid zone are found only on the seashore, and on the elevated plains of the Andes.† The *Avicennia* of Cumana is distinguished by another peculiarity not less remarkable: it furnishes an instance of a plant common to the shores of South America and the coasts of Malabar.

The Indian pilot led us across his garden, which rather resembled a copse than a piece of cultivated ground. He showed us, as a proof of the fertility of this climate, a silk-cotton tree (*Bombax heptaphyllum*), the trunk of which, in its fourth year, had reached nearly two feet and a half in diameter. We have observed, on the banks of the Orinoco and the river Magdalena, that the bombax, the carolinea, the ochroma, and other trees of the family of the malvaceæ, are of extremely rapid growth. I nevertheless think that there was some exaggeration in the report of the Indian respecting the age of his bombax; for under the temperate zone, in the hot and damp lands of North America, between the Mississippi and the Alleghany mountains, the trees do not exceed a foot in diameter, in ten years. Vegetation in those parts is in general but a fifth more speedy than in Europe, even taking as an example the *Platanus occidentalis*, the tulip tree, and the *Cupressus disticha*, which reach from nine to fifteen feet in diameter. On the strand of Cumana, in the garden of the Guayqueria pilot, we saw for the first time a *quama*‡ loaded with flowers, and remarkable for the extreme

* Mangle prieto.

† On the extreme rarity of the social plants in the tropics, see my "Essay on the Geog. of Plants," p. 19; and a paper by Mr. Brown on the Proteacea, "Trans. of the Lin. Soc.," vol. x., p. 1, p. 23, in which that great botanist has extended and confirmed by numerous facts my ideas on the association of plants of the same species.

‡ *Inga spuria*, which we must not confound with the common inga, *Inga vera*, Willd. (*Mimosa Inga*, Linn.). The white stamina, which, to the number of sixty or seventy, are attached to a greenish corolla, have a silky lustre,