

leaves,* and particularly cassias, the number of which is so great in South America, that we collected, in our travels, more than thirty new species.

On leaving the Indian suburb, and ascending the river southward, we found a grove of cactus, a delightful spot, shaded by tamarinds, brazilettos, bombax, and other plants, remarkable for their leaves and flowers. The soil here is rich in pasturage, and dairy-houses built with reeds, are separated from each other by clumps of trees. The milk remains fresh, when kept, not in the calabashes† of very thick ligneous fibres, but in porous earthen vessels from Maniquarez. A prejudice prevalent in northern countries had long led me to believe, that cows, under the torrid zone, did not yield rich milk; but my abode at Cumana, and especially an excursion through the vast plains of Calabozo, covered with grasses, and herbaceous sensitive plants, convinced me that the ruminating animals of Europe become perfectly habituated to the hottest climates, provided they find water and good nourishment. Milk is excellent in the provinces of New Andalusia, Barcelona, and Venezuela; and butter is better in the plains of the equinoctial zone, than on the ridge of the Andes, where the Alpine plants, enjoying in no season a sufficiently high temperature, are less aromatic than on the Pyrenees, on the mountains of Estremadura, or of Greece. As the inhabitants of Cumana prefer the coolness of the sea breeze to the sight of vegetation, their favourite walk is the open shore. The Spaniards, who in general have no great predilection for trees, or for the warbling of birds, have transported their tastes and their habits into the colonies. In Terra Firma, Mexico, and Peru, it is rare to see a native plant a tree, merely with the view of procuring shade; and if we except the environs of the great capitals, walks bordered with trees are almost unknown in those countries. The arid plain of Cumana exhibits after violent showers an extraordinary phenomenon. The earth, when drenched with rain, and

* The Spaniards designate by the name of *dormideras* (sleeping plants), the small number of mimosas with irritable leaves. We have increased this number by three species previously unknown to botanists, namely, the *Mimosa humilis* of Cumana, the *M. pellita* of the savannahs of Calabozo, and the *M. dormiens* of the banks of the Apure.

† These calabashes are made from the fruit of the *Crescentia cujete*.