

18.5° to 20°, which under this zone, and to the sensations of a traveller coming from the coasts, appears a great degree of coolness. I never perceived the temperature in the night at Cumana below 21°. The greatest heat is felt from noon to 3 o'clock, the thermometer keeping between 26° and 27°. The maximum of the heat, about two hours after the passage of the sun over the meridian, was very regularly marked by a storm which murmured near. Large black and low clouds dissolved in rain, which came down in torrents: these rains lasted two or three hours, and lowered the thermometer five or six degrees. About five o'clock the rain entirely ceased, the sun reappeared a little before it set, and the hygrometer moved towards the point of dryness; but at eight or nine we were again enveloped in a thick stratum of vapour. These different changes follow successively, we were assured, during whole months, and yet not a breath of wind is felt. Comparative experiments led us to believe that in general the nights at Cumanacoa are from two to three, and the days from four to five centesimal degrees cooler than at the port of Cumana. These differences are great; and if, instead of meteorological instruments, we consulted only our own feelings, we should suppose they were still more considerable.

The vegetation of the plain which surrounds the town is monotonous, but, owing to the extreme humidity of the air, remarkable for its freshness. It is chiefly characterized by an arborescent solanum, forty feet in height, the *Urtica baccifera*, and a new species of the genus *Guettarda*.\* The ground is very fertile, and might be easily watered if trenches were cut from a great number of rivulets, the springs of which never dry up during the whole year. The most valuable production of the district is tobacco. Since the introduction of the *farm*† in 1779, the cultivation of tobacco in the province of Cumana is nearly confined to the valley of Cumanacoa; as in Mexico it is permitted only in

\* These trees are surrounded by *Galega pilosa*, *Stellaria rotundifolia*, *Aegiphila elata* of Swartz, *Sauvagesia erecta*, *Martinia perennis*, and a great number of Rivinas. We find among the gramineous plants, in the savanna of Cumanacoa, the *Paspalus lenticularis*, *Panicum ascendens*, *Pennisetum uniflorum*, *Gynerium saccharoides*, *Eleusine indica*, &c.

† "Estanco real de tabaco," royal monopoly of tobacco.