

which is but little soluble in water, and in which the stimulant property of tobacco seems to reside.

At Cumanacoa the tobacco, after being gathered, undergoes a preparation which the Spaniards call *cura seca*. The leaves are suspended by threads of cocuiza;* their ribs are taken out, and they are twisted into cords. The prepared tobacco should be carried to the king's warehouses in the month of June; but the indolence of the inhabitants, and the preference they give to the cultivation of maize and cassava, usually prevent them from finishing the preparation before the month of August. It is easy to conceive that the leaves, so long exposed to very moist air, must lose some of their flavour. The administrator of the farm keeps the tobacco deposited in the king's warehouses sixty days without touching it. When this time is expired, the *manoques* are opened to examine the quality. If the administrator find the tobacco well prepared, he pays the cultivator three piastres for the *aroba* of twenty-five pounds weight. The same quantity is resold for the king's profit at twelve piastres and a half. The tobacco that is rotten (*podrido*), that is, again gone into a state of fermentation, is publicly burnt; and the cultivator, who has received money in advance from the royal farm, loses irrevocably the fruits of his long labour. We saw heaps, amounting to five hundred *arobas*, burnt in the great square, which in Europe might have served for making snuff.

The soil of Cumanacoa is so favourable to this branch of culture, that tobacco grows wild, wherever the seed finds any moisture. It grows thus spontaneously at Cerro del Cuchivano, and around the cavern of Caripe. The only kind of tobacco cultivated at Cumanacoa, as well as in the neighbouring districts of Aricagua and San Lorenzo, is that with large sessile leaves,† called Virginia tobacco. The tobacco with petiolate leaves,‡ which is the *yetl* of the ancient Mexicans, is unknown.

In studying the history of our cultivated plants, we are surprised to find that, before the conquest, the use of tobacco was spread through the greater part of America, while the potato was unknown both in Mexico and the West India Islands, where it grows well in the mountainous regions.

* *Agave Americana*. † *Nicotiana Tabacum*. ‡ *Nicotiana rustica*.