

Tobacco has also been cultivated in Portugal since the year 1559, though the potato did not become an object of European agriculture till the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. This latter plant, which has had so powerful an influence on the well-being of society, has spread in both continents more slowly than tobacco, which can be considered only as an article of luxury.

Next to tobacco, the most important culture of the valley of Cumanacoa is that of indigo. The manufacturers of Cumanacoa, of San Fernando, and of Arenas, produce indigo of greater commercial value than that of Caracas; and often nearly equalling in splendour and richness of colour the indigo of Guatemala. It was from that province that the coasts of Cumana received the first seeds of the *Indigofera Anil*,\* which is cultivated jointly with the *Indigofera tinctoria*. The rains being very frequent in the valley of Cumanacoa, a plant of four feet high yields no more colouring matter than one of a third part that size in the arid valleys of Aragua, to the west of the town of Caracas.

The manufactories we examined are all built on uniform principles. Two steeping vessels, or vats, which receive the plants intended to be brought into a state of fermentation, are joined together. Each vat is fifteen feet square, and two and a half deep. From these upper vats the liquor runs into beaters, between which is placed the water-mill. The axletree of the great wheel crosses the two beaters. It is furnished with ladles, fixed to long handles, adapted for the beating. From a spacious settling-vat, the colouring fecula is carried to the drying place, and spread on planks of *brasiletto*, which, having small wheels, can be sheltered under a roof in case of sudden rains. Sloping and very low roofs give the drying place the appearance of hot-houses at some distance. In the valley of Cumanacoa, the fermentation of the plant is produced with astonishing rapidity. It lasts in general but four or five hours. This short duration can be attributed only to the humidity of the climate, and the absence of the sun during the development of the plant.

\* The indigo known in commerce is produced by four species of plants; the *Indigofera tinctoria*, *I. anil*, *I. argentea*, and *I. disperma*. At the Rio Negro, near the frontiers of Brazil, we found the *I. argentea* growing wild, but only in places anciently inhabited by Indians.