

The town of Cariaco has been repeatedly sacked in former times by the Caribs. Its population has augmented rapidly since the provincial authorities, in spite of prohibitory orders from the court of Madrid, have often favoured the trade with foreign colonies. The population amounted, in 1800, to more than 6000 souls. The inhabitants are active in the cultivation of cotton, which is of a very fine quality. The capsules of the cotton-tree, when separated from the woolly substance, are carefully burnt; as those husks if thrown into the river, and exposed to putrefaction, yield noxious exhalations. The culture of the cacao-tree has of late considerably diminished. This valuable tree bears only after eight or ten years. Its fruit keeps very badly in the warehouses, and becomes mouldy at the expiration of a year, notwithstanding all the precautions employed for drying it.

It is only in the interior of the province, to the east of the Sierra de Meapire, that new plantations of the cacao-tree are seen. They become there the more productive, as the lands, newly cleared and surrounded by forests, are in contact with an atmosphere damp, stagnant, and loaded with mephitic exhalations. We there see fathers of families, attached to the old habits of the colonists, slowly amass a little fortune for themselves and their children. Thirty thousand cacao-trees will secure competence to a family for a generation and a half. If the culture of cotton and coffee have led to the diminution of cacao in the province of Caracas and in the small valley of Cariaco, it must be admitted that this last branch of colonial industry has in general increased in the interior of the provinces of New Barcelona and Cumana. The causes of the progressive movement of the cacao-tree from west to east may be easily conceived. The province of Caracas has been from a remote period cultivated: and, in the torrid zone, in proportion as a country has been cleared, it becomes drier and more exposed to the winds. These physical changes have been adverse to the propagation of cacao-trees, the plantations of which, diminishing in the province of Caracas, have accumulated eastward on a newly-cleared and virgin soil. The cacao of Cumana is infinitely superior to that of Guayaquil. The best is produced in the valley of San Bonifacio; as the best cacao of New Barcelona, Cara-