

sea), alone have the property of the cocoa-tree; that of being watered equally well with fresh and salt water. This circumstance is favourable to their migrations; and if the sugarcane of the sea-shore yield a syrup that is a little brackish, it is believed at the same time to be better fitted for the distillation of spirit than the juice produced from the canes in inland situations.

The cocoa-tree, in the other parts of America, is in general cultivated around farm-houses, and the fruit is eaten; in the gulf of Cariaco, it forms extensive plantations. In a fertile and moist ground, the tree begins to bear fruit abundantly in the fourth year; but in dry soils it bears only at the expiration of ten years. The duration of the tree does not in general exceed eighty or a hundred years; and its mean height at that age is from seventy to eighty feet. This rapid growth is so much the more remarkable, as other palm-trees, for instance, the *moriche*,\* and the palm of Sombrero,† the longevity of which is very great, frequently do not attain a greater height than fourteen or eighteen feet in the space of sixty years. In the first thirty or forty years, a cocoa-tree of the gulf of Cariaco bears every lunation a cluster of ten or fourteen nuts, all of which, however, do not ripen. It may be reckoned that, on an average, a tree produces annually a hundred nuts, which yield eight *flascos*‡ of oil. In Provence, an olive-tree thirty years old yields twenty pounds, or seven *flascos* of oil, so that it produces something less than a cocoa-tree. There are in the gulf of Cariaco plantations (*haciendas*) of eight or nine thousand cocoa-trees. They resemble, in their picturesque appearance, those fine plantations of date-trees near Elche, in Murcia, where, over the superficies of one square league, there may be found upwards of 70,000 palms. The cocoa-tree bears fruit in abundance till it is thirty or forty years old; after that age the produce diminishes, and a trunk a hundred years old, without being altogether barren, yields very little. In the town of Cumana there is prepared a great quantity of cocoa-nut oil, which is limpid, without smell, and very fit for burning. The trade in this oil is not less active than that on the coast of Africa for palm-oil, which is obtained from the

\* *Mauritia flexuosa*.

† *Corypha tectorum*.

‡ One *flasco* contains 70 or 80 cubic inches, Paris measure.