

sometimes preferred to the passage by sea, to avoid the adverse current. The postman from Caracas is nine days in performing this journey. We often saw persons, who had followed him, arrive at Cumana ill of nervous and miasmatic fevers. The tree of which the bark* furnishes a salutary remedy for those fevers, grows in the same valleys, and upon the edge of the same forests which send forth the pernicious exhalations. M. Bonpland recognised the cuspate in the vegetation of the gulf of Santa Fé, situated between the ports of Cumana and Barcelona. The sickly traveller may perchance repose in a cottage, the inhabitants of which are ignorant of the febrifuge qualities of the trees that shade the surrounding valleys.

Having proceeded by sea from Cumana to La Guayra, we intended to take up our abode in the town of Caracas, till the end of the rainy season. From Caracas we proposed to direct our course across the great plains or llanos, to the Missions of the Orinoco; to go up that vast river, to the south of the cataracts, as far as the Rio Negro and the frontiers of Brazil; and thence to return to Cumana by the capital of Spanish Guiana, commonly called, on account of its situation, Angostura, or the Strait. We could not determine the time we might require to accomplish a tour of seven hundred leagues, more than two-thirds of that distance having to be traversed in boats. The only parts of the Orinoco known on the coasts are those near its mouth. No commercial intercourse is kept up with the Missions. The whole of the country beyond the llanos is unknown to the inhabitants of Cumana and Caracas. Some think that the plains of Calabozo, covered with turf, stretch eight hundred leagues southward, communicating with the Steppes or Pampas of Buenos Ayres; others, recalling to mind the great mortality which prevailed among the troops of Iturriaga and Solano, during their expedition to the Orinoco, consider the whole country, south of the cataracts of Atures, as extremely pernicious to health. In a region where travelling is so uncommon, people seem to feel a pleasure in exaggerating to strangers the difficulties arising from the climate, the wild animals, and the Indians. Nevertheless we persisted in the project we

* Cortex Angosturæ of our pharmacopæias, the bark of the *Bonplandia trifoliata*.