

coffee, and the establishment of plantations (which dates only from the year 1795) has increased the number of agricultural negroes,* the apple and quince-trees scattered in the savannahs have given place, in the valley of Caracas, to maize and pulse. Rice, watered by means of small trenches, was formerly more common than it now is in the plain of Chacao. I observed in this province, as in Mexico and in all the elevated lands of the torrid zone, that, where the apple-tree is most abundant, the culture of the pear-tree is attended with great difficulty. I have been assured, that near Caracas the excellent apples sold in the markets come from trees not grafted. There are no cherry-trees. The olive-trees which I saw in the court of the convent of San Felipe de Neri, were large and fine; but the luxuriance of their vegetation prevented them from bearing fruit.

If the atmospheric constitution of the valley be favourable to the different kinds of culture on which colonial industry is based, it is not equally favourable to the health of the inhabitants, or to that of foreigners settled in the capital of Venezuela. The extreme inconstancy of the weather, and the frequent suppression of cutaneous perspiration, give birth to catarrhal affections, which assume the most various forms. A European, once accustomed to the violent heat, enjoys better health at Cumana, in the valley of Aragua, and in every place where the low region of the tropics is not very humid, than at Caracas, and in those mountain-climates which are vaunted as the abode of perpetual spring.

Speaking of the yellow fever of La Guayra, I mentioned the opinion generally adopted, that this disease is propagated as little from the coast of Venezuela to the capital, as from the coast of Mexico to Xalapa. This opinion is founded on the experience of the last twenty years. The contagious disorders which were severely felt in the port of La Guayra, were scarcely felt at Caracas. I am not convinced that the American typhus, rendered endemic on

* The consumption of provisions, especially meat, is so considerable in the towns of Spanish America, that at Caracas, in 1800, there were 40,000 oxen killed every year: while in Paris, in 1793, with a population fourteen times as great, the number amounted only to 70,000.