

vated, trees will bear sixteen, eighteen, and even twenty pounds of coffee. In general, however, more than a pound and a half or two pounds cannot be expected from each plant; and even this is superior to the mean produce of the West India Islands. The coffee trees suffer much from rain at the time of flowering, as well as from the want of water for artificial irrigation, and also from a parasitic plant, a new species of *loranthus*, which clings to the branches. When, in plantations of eighty or a hundred thousand shrubs, we consider the immense quantity of organic matter contained in the pulpy berry of the coffee-tree, we may be astonished that no attempts have been made to extract a spirituous liquor from them.*

If the troubles of St. Domingo, the temporary rise in the price of colonial produce, and the emigration of French planters, were the first causes of the establishment of coffee-plantations on the continent of America, in the island of Cuba, and in Jamaica; their produce has far more than compensated the deficiency of the exportation from the French West India Islands. This produce has augmented in proportion to the population, the change of customs, and the increasing luxury of the nations of Europe. The island

* The berries heaped together produce a vinous fermentation, during which a very pleasant alcoholic smell is emitted. Placing, at Caracas, the ripe fruit of the coffee-tree under an inverted jar, quite filled with water, and exposed to the rays of the sun, I remarked that no extrication of gas took place in the first twenty-four hours. After thirty-six hours the berries became brown, and yielded gas. A thermometer, enclosed in the jar in contact with the fruit, kept at night 4° or 5° higher than the external air. In the space of eighty-seven hours, sixty berries, under various jars, yielded me from thirty-eight to forty cubic inches of a gas, which underwent no sensible diminution with nitrous gas. Though a great quantity of carbonic acid had been absorbed by the water as it was produced, I still found 0.78 in the forty inches. The remainder, or 0.22, was nitrogen. The carbonic acid had not been formed by the absorption of the atmospheric oxygen. That which is evolved from the berries of the coffee-tree slightly moistened, and placed in a phial with a glass stopple filled with air, contains alcohol in suspension; like the foul air which is formed in our cellars during the fermentation of must. On agitating the gas in contact with water, the latter acquires a decidedly alcoholic flavour. How many substances are perhaps contained in a state of suspension in those mixtures of carbonic acid and hydrogen, which are called deleterious miasmata, and which rise everywhere within the tropics, in marshy grounds, on the sea-shore, and in forests where the soil is strewn with dead leaves, rotten fruits, and putrefying insects.