

bifurcation. Its delicate and tender foliage was agreeably relieved on the azure of the sky. We stopped a long time under this vegetable roof. The trunk of the *zamang* del Guayre,* which is found on the road from Turmero to Maracay, is only sixty feet high, and nine thick; but its real beauty consists in the form of its head. The branches extend like an immense umbrella, and bend toward the ground, from which they remain at a uniform distance of twelve or fifteen feet. The circumference of this head is so regular, that, having traced different diameters, I found them one hundred and ninety-two and one hundred and eighty-six feet. One side of the tree was entirely stripped of its foliage, owing to the drought; but on the other side there remained both leaves and flowers. Tillandsias, loranthæ, Cactus Pitahaya, and other parasite plants, cover its branches, and crack the bark. The inhabitants of these villages, but particularly the Indians, hold in veneration the *zamang* del Guayre, which the first conquerors found almost in the same state in which it now remains. Since it has been observed with attention, no change has appeared in its thickness or height. This *zamang* must be at least as old as the Orotava dragon-tree. There is something solemn and majestic in the aspect of aged trees; and the violation of these monuments of nature is severely punished in countries destitute of monuments of art. We heard with satisfaction that the present proprietor of the *zamang* had brought an action against a cultivator who had been guilty of cutting off a branch. The cause was tried, and the tribunal condemned the offender. We find near Turmero and the Hacienda de Cura other *zamangs*, having trunks larger than that of Guayre, but their hemispherical heads are not of equal extent.

The culture and population of the plains augment in the direction of Cura and Guacara, on the northern side of the lake. The valleys of Aragua contain more than 52,000 inhabitants, on a space thirteen leagues in length, and two in width. This is a relative population of two thousand souls on a square league. The village, or rather the small

* The mimos of La Guayre; *zamang* being the Indian name for the genera *mimosa*, *desmanthus*, and *acacia*. The place where the tree is found is called El Guayre.