

hundred or two hundred and forty piastres a-year. The creole cane and the cane of Otaheite\* are planted in the month of April, the first at four, the second at five feet distance. The cane ripens in fourteen months. It flowers in the month of October, if the plant be sufficiently vigorous; but the top is cut off before the panicle unfolds. In all the monocotyledonous plants (for example, the maguey cultivated at Mexico for extracting pulque, the wine-yielding palm-tree, and the sugar-cane), the flowering alters the quality of the juices. The preparation of sugar, the boiling, and the claying, are very imperfect in Terra Firma, because it is made only for home consumption; and for wholesale, *papelon* is preferred to sugar, either refined or raw. This *papelon* is an impure sugar, in the form of little loaves, of a yellow-brown colour. It contains a mixture of molasses and mucilaginous matter. The poorest man eats *papelon*, as in Europe he eats cheese. It is believed to have nutritive qualities. Fermented with water it yields the *guarapo*, the favourite beverage of the people. In the province of Caracas subcarbonate of potash is used, instead of lime, to purify the juice of the sugar-cane. The ashes of the *bucare*, which is the *Erythrina corallodendrum*, are preferred.

The sugar-cane was introduced very late, probably towards the end of the sixteenth century, from the West India Islands, into the valleys of Aragua. It was known in India, in China, and in all the islands of the Pacific, from the most remote antiquity; and it was planted at Khorassan, in Persia, as early as the fifth century of our era, in order to obtain from it solid sugar.† The Arabs carried this reed, so useful to the inhabitants of hot and temperate countries, to the shores of the Mediterranean. In 1306, its cultivation was yet unknown in Sicily; but was already common in the island of Cyprus, at Rhodes, and in the Morea. A hundred years after it enriched Calabria, Sicily, and the coasts of Spain. From Sicily the Infante Don Henry trans-

\* In the island of Palma, where in the latitude of 29° the sugar-cane is said to be cultivated as high as 140 toises above the level of the Atlantic, the Otaheite cane requires more heat than the Creole cane.

† The Indian name for the sugar-cane is *sharkara*. Thence the word **sugar**.