

Whilst the *palo de vaca* manifests the immense fecundity and the bounty of nature in the torrid zone, it also reminds us of the numerous causes which favour in those fine climates the careless indolence of man. Mungo Park has made known the butter-tree of Bambarra, which M. De Candolle suspects to be of the family of sapotas, as well as our milk-tree. The plantain, the sago-tree, and the mauritia of the Orinoco, are as much bread-trees as the *rema* of the South Sea. The fruits of the *crescentia* and the *lecycthis* serve as vessels for containing food, while the spathes of the palms, and the bark of trees, furnish caps and garments without a seam. The knots, or rather the interior cells of

Bouillon-Lagrange, and Vauquelin (*Annales de Chimie*, vol. xlvi, vol. li, vol. lxxix, vol. lxxx, vol. lxxxv, have pointed out a great quantity of albumen in the substance of the *Agaricus deliciosus*, an edible mushroom. It is this albumen contained in their juice which renders them so hard when boiled. It has been proved that morels (*Morchella esculenta*) can be converted into sebaceous and adipoceros matter, capable of being used in the fabrication of soap. (De Candolle, sur les Propriétés médicinales des Plantes.) Saccharine matter has also been found in mushrooms by Gunther. It is in the family of the fungi, more especially in the *clavariæ*, *phalli*, *helvetiæ*, the *merulii*, and the small *gymnopæ* which display themselves in a few hours after a storm of rain, that organic nature produces with most rapidity the greatest variety of chemical principles—sugar, albumen, adipocire, acetate of potash, fat, ozmazome, the aromatic principles, &c. It would be interesting to examine, besides the milk of the lactescent fungi, those species which, when cut in pieces, change their colour on the contact of atmospheric air.

Though we have referred the *palo de vaca* to the family of the sapotas, we have nevertheless found in it a great resemblance to some plants of the urticeous kind, especially to the fig-tree, because of its terminal stipulæ in the shape of a horn; and to the brosimum, on account of the structure of its fruit. M. Kunth would even have preferred this last classification; if the description of the fruit, made on the spot, and the nature of the milk, which is acrid in the urticeæ, and sweet in the sapotas, did not seem to confirm our conjecture. Bredemeyer saw, like us, the fruit, and not the flower of the tree. He asserts that he observed [sometimes?] two seeds, lying one against the other, as in the alligator pear-tree (*Laurus perseæ*). Perhaps this botanist had the intention of expressing the same conformation of the nucleus that Swartz indicates in the description of the brosimum: —“nucleus bilobus aut bipartibilis.” We have mentioned the places where this remarkable tree grows: it will be easy for botanical travellers to procure the flower of the *palo de vaca* and to remove the doubts which still remain, of the family to which it belongs.