

respecting the pretended fossil caoutchouc, called *dapicho* by the Indians. The old chief Javita led us to the brink of a rivulet which runs into the Tuamini; and showed us that, after digging two or three feet deep, in a marshy soil, this substance was found between the roots of two trees known by the name of the *jacio* and the *curvana*. The first is the hevea of Aublet, or siphonia of the modern botanists, known to furnish the caoutchouc of commerce in Cayenne and Grand Para; the second has pinnate leaves, and its juice is milky, but very thin, and almost destitute of viscosity. The *dapicho* appears to be the result of an extravasation of the sap from the roots. This extravasation takes place more especially when the trees have attained a great age, and the interior of the trunk begins to decay. The bark and alburnum crack; and thus is effected naturally, what the art of man performs for the purpose of collecting the milky juices of the hevea, the castilloa, and the caoutchouc fig-tree. Aublet relates, that the Galibis and the Garipons of Cayenne begin by making a deep incision at the foot of the trunk, so as to penetrate into the wood; soon after they join with this horizontal notch others both perpendicular and oblique, reaching from the top of the trunk nearly to the roots. All these incisions conduct the milky juice towards one point, where the vase of clay is placed, in which the caoutchouc is to be deposited. We saw the Indians of Carichana operate nearly in the same manner.

If, as I suppose, the accumulation and overflowing of the milk in the *jacio* and the *curvana* be a pathological phenomenon, it must sometimes take place at the extremity of the longest roots, for we found masses of *dapicho* two feet in diameter and four inches thick, eight feet distant from the trunks. Sometimes the Indians dig in vain at the foot of dead trees; at other times the *dapicho* is found beneath the hevea or *jacio* still green. The substance is white, corky, fragile, and resembles by its laminated structure and undulating edge, the *Boletus ignarius*. The *dapicho* perhaps takes a long time to form; it is probably a juice thickened by a particular disposition of the vegetable organs, diffused and coagulated in a humid soil secluded from the contact of light; it is caoutchouc in a particular state, I may almost