

that fine timber for building, which, on the north-west coast of America, on mountains where the thermometer falls in winter to 20° cent. below zero, we find in the family of the coniferæ. Such, in every zone, and in all the families of American plants, is the prodigious force of vegetation, that, in the latitude of fifty-seven degrees north, on the same isothermal line with St. Petersburg and the Orkneys, the *Pinus canadensis* displays trunks one hundred and fifty feet high, and six feet in diameter.* Towards night we arrived at a small farm, in the *puerto* or landing place of Pimichin. We were shown a cross near the road, which marked the spot "where a poor capuchin missionary had been killed by wasps." I state this on the authority of the monks of Javita and the Indians. They talk much in these countries of wasps and venomous ants, but we saw neither one nor the other of these insects. It is well known that in the torrid zone slight stings often cause fits of fever almost as violent as those that with us accompany severe organic injuries. The death of this poor monk was probably the effect of fatigue and damp, rather than of the venom contained in the stings of wasps, which the Indians dread extremely. We must not confound the wasps of Javita with the melipones bees, called by the Spaniards *angelitos* (little angels) which covered our faces and hands on the summit of the Silla de Caracas.

The landing place of Pimichin is surrounded by a small plantation of caaco-trees; they are very vigorous, and here, as on the banks of the Atabapo and the Guainia, they are loaded with flowers and fruits at all seasons. They begin to bear from the fourth year; on the coast of Caracas they do not bear till the sixth or eighth year. The soil of these countries is sandy, wherever it is not marshy; but the light lands of the Tuamini and Pimichin are extremely productive†. Around the *conucos* of Pimichin grows, in its wild

* Langsdorf informs us that the inhabitants of Norfolk Sound make boats of a single trunk, fifty feet long, four feet and a half broad, and three high at the sides. They contain thirty persons. These boats remind us of the canoes of the Rio Chagres in the isthmus of Panama, in the torrid zone. The *Populus balsamifera* also attains an immense height, on the mountains that border Norfolk Sound.

† At Javita, an extent of fifty feet square, planted with *Jatropha manihot* (yucca) yields in two years, in the worst soil, a harvest of six *tortas* of cassava: the same extent on a middling soil yields in fourteen