

of furniture to which they wish to give a fine white colour. It thickens by the contact of the air, without growing yellow, and it appears singularly glossy. We have already mentioned that the caoutchouc is the oily part, the butter of all vegetable milk. It is, no doubt, a particular modification of caoutchouc that forms this coagulum, this white and glossy skin, that seems as if covered with copal varnish. If different colours could be given to this milky varnish, a very expeditious method would be found of painting and varnishing our carriages by one process. The more we study vegetable chemistry in the torrid zone, the more we shall discover, in remote spots, and half-prepared in the organs of plants, products which we believe belong only to the animal kingdom, or which we obtain by processes which are often tedious and difficult. Already we have found the wax that coats the palm-tree of the Andes of Quindiu, the silk of the palm-tree of Mocoa, the nourishing milk of the *palo de vaca*, the butter-tree of Africa, and the caseous substances obtained from the almost animalized sap of the *Carica papaya*. These discoveries will be multiplied, when, as the political state of the world seems now to indicate, European civilization shall flow in a great measure toward the equinoctial regions of the New Continent.

The marshy tract between Javita and the *embarcadero* of Pimichin is infested with great numbers of vipers. Before we took possession of the deserted hut, the Indians killed two great *mapanare* serpents.\* These grow to four or five feet long. They appeared to me to be the same species as those I saw in the Rio Magdalena. This serpent is a beautiful animal, but extremely venomous, white on the belly, and spotted with brown and red on the back. As the inside of the hut was filled with grass, and we were lying on the ground, there being no means of suspending our hammocks, we were not without inquietude during the night. In the morning a large viper was found on lifting the jaguar-skin upon which one of our domestics had slept.

\* This name is given in the Spanish colonies to very different species. The *Coluber mapanare* of the province of Caracas has one hundred and forty-two ventral plates, and thirty-eight double caudal scales. The *Coluber mapanare* of the Rio Magdalena has two hundred and eight ventral plates, and sixty-four double caudal scales.