

Esmeralda assured us, that in advancing above the Gehette and the Chiguire, the *juvia* and cacao-trees become so common that the wild Indians (the Guaicas and Guaharibos) do not disturb the Indians of the missions when gathering in their harvests. They do not envy them the productions with which nature has enriched their own soil. Scarcely any attempt has been made to propagate the *almondrones* in the settlements of the Upper Orinoco. To this the indolence of the inhabitants is a greater obstacle than the rapidity with which the oil becomes rancid in the amygdaliform seeds. We found only three trees of the kind at the mission of San Carlos, and two at Esmeralda. These majestic trees were eight or ten years old, and had not yet borne flowers.

As early as the sixteenth century, the seeds with ligneous and triangular teguments (but not the great *drupe* like a cocoa-nut, which contains the almonds, were known in Europe. I recognise them in an imperfect engraving of Clusius.\* This botanist designates them under the name of *almendras del Peru*. They had no doubt been carried, as a very rare fruit, to the Upper Marañon, and thence, by the Cordilleras, to Quito and Peru. The 'Novus Orbis' of Laet, in which I found the first account of the cow-tree, furnishes also a description and a figure singularly exact of the fruit of the bertholletia. Laet calls the tree *totocke*, and mentions the drupe of the size of the human head, which contains the almonds. The weight of these fruits, he says, is so enormous, that the savages dare not enter the forests without covering their heads and shoulders with a buckler of very hard wood. These bucklers are unknown to the natives of Esmeralda, but they told us of the danger incurred when the fruit ripens and falls from a height of fifty or sixty feet. The triangular seeds of the *juvia* are sold in Portugal under the vague appellation of chesnuds (*castañas*) of the Amazon, and in England under the name

\* Clusius distinguishes very properly the *almendras del Peru*, our *Bertholletia excelsa*, or *juvia*, (fructus amygdalæ-nucleo, triangularis, dorso lato, in bina latera angulosa desinente, rugosus, paululum cuneiformis) from the *pekea*, or *Amygdala guayanica*. Raleigh, who knew none of the productions of the Upper Orinoco, does not speak of the *juvia*; but it appears that he first brought to Europe the fruit of the mauritia palm, of which we have so often spoken. (Fructus elegantissimus, squamosus, similis palmæ-pini.)