

among the monocotyledons, and the *bertholletia* and the *lecythis* among the dicotyledons. In our climates only the cucurbitaceæ produce in the space of a few months fruits of an extraordinary size; but these fruits are pulpy and succulent. Within the tropics, the *bertholletia* forms in less than fifty or sixty days a pericarp, the ligneous part of which is half an inch thick, and which it is difficult to saw with the sharpest instruments. A great naturalist has observed, that the *wood of fruits* attains in general a hardness which is scarcely to be found in the wood of the trunks of trees. The pericarp of the *bertholletia* has traces of four cells, and I have sometimes found even five. The seeds have two very distinct coverings, and this circumstance renders the structure of the fruit more complicated than in the *lecythis*, the *pekea* or *caryocar*, and the *saouvari*. The first tegument is osseous or ligneous, triangular, tuberculated on its exterior surface, and of the colour of cinnamon. Four or five, and sometimes eight of these triangular nuts, are attached to a central partition. As they are loosened in time, they move freely in the large spherical pericarp. The capuchin monkeys (*Simia chiropotes*) are singularly fond of the Brazil nuts; and the noise made by the seeds, when the fruit is shaken as it falls from the tree, excites the appetites of these animals in the highest degree. I have most frequently found only from fifteen to twenty-two nuts in each fruit. The second tegument of the almonds is membranaceous, and of a brown-yellow. Their taste is extremely agreeable when they are fresh; but the oil, with which they abound, and which is so useful in the arts, becomes easily rancid. Although at the Upper Orinoco we often ate considerable quantities of these almonds for want of other food, we never felt any bad effects from so doing. The spherical pericarp of the *bertholletia*, perforated at the summit, is not dehiscent; the upper and swelled part of the columella forms (according to M. Kunth) a sort of inner cover, as in the fruit of the *lecythis*, but it seldom opens of itself. Many seeds, from the decomposition of the oil contained in the cotyledons, lose the faculty of germination before the rainy season, in which the ligneous integument of the pericarp opens by the effect of putrefaction. A tale is very current on the banks of the