

the favourite beverage; the wine of the palm-tree, which is used on the Orinoco, being almost unknown on the coast. It is curious to observe, that men in different zones, to satisfy the passion of inebriety, employ not only all the families of monocotyledonous and dicotyledonous plants, but even the poisonous Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*) of which, with disgusting economy, the Coriacs have learnt to drink the same juice several times during five successive days.\*

The packet boats (*correos*) from Corunna bound for the Havannah and Mexico had been due three months; and it was believed they had been taken by the English cruisers stationed on this coast. Anxious to reach Cumana, in order to avail ourselves of the first opportunity that might offer for our passage to Vera Cruz, we hired an open boat called a *lancha*, a sort of craft employed habitually in the latitudes east of Cape Codera, where the sea is scarcely ever rough. Our *lancha*, which was laden with cacao, carried on a contraband trade with the island of Trinidad. For this reason the owner imagined we had nothing to fear from the enemy's vessels, which then blockaded all the Spanish ports. We embarked our collection of plants, our instruments, and our monkeys; and, the weather being delightful, we hoped to make a very short passage from the mouth of the Rio Neveri to Cumana: but we had scarcely reached the narrow channel between the continent and the rocky isles of Borracha and the Chimanas, when to our great surprise we came in sight of an armed boat, which, whilst hailing us from a great distance, fired some musket-shot at us. The boat belonged to a privateer of Halifax; and I recognized among the sailors a Prussian, a native of Memel. I had found no opportunity, since my arrival in America, of expressing myself in my native language, and I could have wished to have spoken it on a less unpleasant occasion. Our protesta-

\* Mr. Langsdor (*Wetterausisches Journal*, pt. i. p. 254) first made known this very extraordinary physiological phenomenon, which I prefer describing in Latin: "*Coriæcorum gens, in ora Asiæ septentrioni opposita, potum sibi excogitavit ex succo inebriante agarici muscarii. Qui succus (æque ut asparagorum), vel per humanum corpus transfusus, temulentiam nihilominus facit. Quare gens misera et inops, quo rarius mentis sit suæ, propriam urinam bibit identidem: continuoque mingens rursusque hauriens eundem succum (dicas, ne ulla in parte mundi desit ebrietas), pauculis agaricis producere in diem quintum temulentiam potest.*"