

ples, a white man, were he barefooted, should never accept money "in the presence of those vile coloured people!" (*gente parda*). Less disdainful than our European countryman, we saluted politely the group of men of colour, who were employed in drawing off into large calabashes, or fruits of the *Crescentia cujete*, the palm-tree wine, from the trunks of felled trees. We asked them to explain to us this operation, which we had already seen practised in the missions of the Cataracts. The vine of the country is the *palma dulce*, the *Cocos butyracea*, which, near Malgar, in the valley of the Magdalena, is called "the wine palm-tree," and here, on account of its majestic height, "the royal palm-tree." After having thrown down the trunk, which diminishes but little towards the top, they make just, below the point whence the leaves (fronds) and spathes issue, an excavation in the ligneous part, eighteen inches long, eight broad, and six in depth. They work in the hollow of the tree, as though they were making a canoe; and three days afterwards this cavity is found filled with a yellowish-white juice, very limpid, with a sweet and vinous flavour. The fermentation appears to commence as soon as the trunk falls, but the vessels preserve their vitality; for we saw that the sap flowed even when the summit of the palm-tree (that part whence the leaves sprout out) is a foot higher than the lower end, near the roots. The sap continues to mount as in the arborescent *Euphorbia* recently cut. During eighteen to twenty days, the palm-tree wine is daily collected; the last is less sweet, but more alcoholic and more highly esteemed. One tree yields as much as eighteen bottles of sap, each bottle containing forty-two cubic inches. The natives affirm that the flowing is more abundant, when the petioles of the leaves, which remain fixed to the trunk, are burnt.

The great humidity and thickness of the forest forced us to retrace our steps, and to gain the shore before sunset. In several places, the compact limestone rock, probably of tertiary formation, is visible. A thick layer of clay and mould rendered observation difficult; but a shelf of carburetted and shining slate seemed to me to indicate the presence of more ancient formations. It has been affirmed that coal is to be found on the banks of the Sinu. We met with Zambos,