

medicine is very considerable. We see by the works of Clusius, that at the beginning of the Conquista, Europe obtained this salutary medicament from the Mexican coast of Honduras and the port of Guayaquil. The trade in *zarza* is now more active in those ports which have interior communications with the Orinoco, the Rio Negro, and the Amazon.

The trials made in several botanical gardens of Europe prove that the *Smilax glauca* of Virginia, which it is pretended is the *S. sarsaparilla* of Linnæus, may be cultivated in the open air, wherever the mean winter temperature rises above six or seven degrees of the centigrade thermometer\*; but those species that possess the most active virtues belong exclusively to the torrid zone, and require a much higher degree of heat. In reading the works of Clusius, it can scarcely be conceived why our writers on the *Materia Medica* persist in considering a plant of the United States as the most ancient type of the officinal species of the genus *smilax*.

We found in the possession of the Indians of the Rio Negro some of those green stones, known by the name of "Amazon stones," because the natives pretend, according to an ancient tradition, that they come from the country "of the women without husbands (*Cougnantainsecouima*), or women living alone (*Aikeambenanot*)." We were told at San Carlos, and in the neighbouring villages, that the sources of the Orinoco, which we found east of the Esmeralda, and in the missions of the Carony and at Angostura, that the sources of the Rio Branco are the native spots of the green stones. These statements confirm the report of an old soldier of the

\* The winter temperature at London and Paris is 4.2° and 3.7°; at Montpellier, 6.7°; at Rome, 7.7°. In that part of Mexico, and the Terra Firma, where we saw the most active species of the *sarsaparilla* growing, (that which supplies the trade of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies) the temperature is from twenty to twenty-six degrees. The roots of another family of monocotyledons (of some *cyperaceæ*) possess also diaphoretic and resolvent properties. The *Carex arenaria*, the *C. hirta*, &c. furnish the German *sarsaparilla* of druggists. According to Clusius, Europe received the first *sarsaparilla* from Yucatan, and the island of Puna, opposite Guayaquil.

+ This word is of the Tamanac language; these women are the *soté Donne* of the Italian missionaries.