

of the Caura, and the plains to the north-east of the sources of the Orinoco, are distinguished by their almost gigantic size from all the other nations I have seen in the new continent. Must it on this account be admitted, that the Caribbees are an entirely distinct race? and that the Guaraons and the Tamanacs, whose languages have an affinity with the Caribbee, have no bond of relationship with them? I think not. Among the nations of the same family, one branch may acquire an extraordinary development of organization. The mountaineers of the Tyrol and Salzburgh are taller than the other Germanic races; the Samoiedes of the Altai are not so little and squat as those of the sea-coast. In like manner it would be difficult to deny that the Galibis are really Caribbees; and yet, notwithstanding the identity of languages, how striking is the difference in their stature and physical constitution!

Before Cortez entered the capital of Montezuma in 1521, the attention of Europe was fixed on the regions we have just traversed. In depicting the manners of the inhabitants of Paria and Cumana, it was thought that the manners of all the inhabitants of the new continent were described. This remark cannot escape those who read the historians of the Conquest, especially the letters of Peter Martyr of Anghiera, written at the court of Ferdinand the Catholic. These letters are full of ingenious observations upon Christopher Columbus, Leo X, and Luther, and are stamped by noble enthusiasm for the great discoveries of an age so rich in extraordinary events. Without entering into any detail on the manners of the nations which have been so long confounded one with another, under the vague denomination of Cumanians (*Cumaneses*), it appears to me important to clear up a fact which I have often heard discussed in Spanish America.

The Pariagotos of the present time are of a brown red colour, as are the Caribbees, the Chaymas, and almost all the nations of the New World. Why do the historians of the sixteenth century affirm that the first navigators saw white men with fair hair at the promontory of Paria? Were they of the same race as those Indians of a less tawny hue, whom M. Bonpland and myself saw at Esmeralda, near the sources of the Orinoco? But these Indians had hair as