

monkey of America. There are certain regions where this belief is particularly prevalent among the people; such are the banks of the Upper Orinoco, the valley of Upar near the lake of Maracaybo, the mountains of Santa Martha and of Merida, the provinces of Quixos, and the banks of the Amazon near Tomependa. In all these places, so distant one from the other, it is asserted that the *salvaje* is easily recognized by the traces of its feet, the toes of which are turned backward. But if there exist a monkey of a large size in the New Continent, how has it happened that for three centuries no man worthy of belief has been able to procure the skin of one? Several hypotheses present themselves to the mind, in order to explain the source of so ancient an error or belief. Has the famous capuchin monkey of Esmeralda (*Simia chiropotes*), with its long canine teeth, and physiognomy much more like man's* than that of the orang-otang, given rise to the fable of the *salvaje*? It is not so large indeed as the coaita (*Simia paniscus*); but when seen at the top of a tree, and the head only visible, it might easily be taken for a human being. It may be also (and this opinion appears to me the most probable) that the 'man of the woods' was one of those large bears, the footsteps of which resemble those of a man, and which are believed in every country to attack women. The animal killed in my time at the foot of the mountains of Merida, and sent, by the name of *salvaje*, to Colonel Ungaro, the governor of the province of Varinas, was in fact a bear with black and smooth fur. Our fellow-traveller, Don Nicolas Soto, had examined it closely. Did the strange idea of a plantigrade animal, the toes of which are placed as if it walked backward, take its origin from the habit of the real savages of the woods, the Indians of the weakest and most timid tribes, of deceiving their enemies, when they enter a forest, or cross a sandy shore, by covering the traces of their feet with sand, or walking backward?

Though I have expressed my doubts of the existence of an unknown species of large monkey in a continent which appears entirely destitute of quadrumanous animals of the family of the oranges, cynocephali, mandrils, and pongos; yet

* The whole of the features—the expression of the physiognomy; but not the forehead.