

the Marañon to establish themselves on the Rio Negro. A taste for the marvellous, and a wish to invest the descriptions of the New Continent with some of the colouring of classic antiquity, no doubt contributed to give great importance to the first narratives of Orellana. In perusing the works of Vespucci, Fernando Columbus, Geraldini, Oviedo, and Pietro Martyr, we recognize this tendency of the writers of the sixteenth century to find among the newly discovered nations all that the Greeks have related to us of the first age of the world, and of the manners of the barbarous Scythians and Africans. But if Oviedo, in addressing his letters to cardinal Bembo, thought fit to flatter the taste of a man so familiar with the study of antiquity, Sir Walter Raleigh had a less poetic aim. He sought to fix the attention of Queen Elizabeth on the great empire of Guiana, the conquest of which he proposed. He gave a description of the rising of that *gilded king (el dorado)*,* whose chamberlains, furnished with long tubes, blew powdered gold every morning over his body, after having rubbed it over with aromatic oils: but nothing could be better adapted to strike the imagination of queen Elizabeth, than the warlike republic of women without husbands, who resisted the Castilian heroes. Such were the motives which prompted exaggeration on the part of those writers who have given most reputation to the Amazons of America; but these motives do not, I think, suffice for entirely rejecting a tradition, which is spread among various nations having no communications one with another.

Thirty years after La Condamine visited Quito, a Portuguese astronomer, Ribeiro, who has traversed the Amazon, and the tributary streams which run into that river on the northern side, has confirmed on the spot all that the learned Frenchman had advanced. He found the same traditions among the Indians; and he collected them with the greater impartiality as he did not himself believe that the Amazons

the nephritic colic and epilepsy, from their fathers, who received them from the *women without husbands.*"

* The term *el dorado*, which signifies *the gilded*, was not originally the name of the country. The territory subsequently distinguished by that appellation was at first known as the country of "el Rey Dorado" (*the Gilded King*).