

the Ventuari as far as that of the Padamo; the Caribbee prevails on the Lower Orinoco; the Ottomac, near the confluence of the Apure, at the Great Cataracts; and the Maravitan, on the banks of the Rio Negro. These are the five or six languages most generally spoken. We were surprised to find at Esmeralda many zambos, mulattos, and copper-coloured people, who called themselves Spaniards (Españoles) and who fancy they are white, because they are not so red as the Indians. These people live in the most absolute misery; they have for the most part been sent hither in banishment (desterrados). Solano, in his haste to found colonies in the interior of the country, in order to guard its entrance against the Portuguese, assembled in the Llanos, and as far as the island of Margareta, vagabonds and malefactors, whom justice had vainly pursued, and made them go up the Orinoco to join the unhappy Indians who had been carried off from the woods. A mineralogical error gave celebrity to Esmeralda. The granites of Duida and Maraguaca contain in open veins fine rock-crystals, some of them of great transparency, others coloured by chlorite or blended with actonite; these were mistaken for diamonds and emeralds.

So near the sources of the Orinoco we heard of nothing in these mountains but the proximity of El Dorado, the lake Parima, and the ruins of the great city of Manoa. A man, still known in the country for his credulity and his love of exaggeration, Don Apollinario Diez de la Fuente, assumed the pompous title of *capitan poblador*, and *cabo militar* (military commander) of the fort of Cassiquiare. This fort consisted of a few trunks of trees, joined together by planks; and to complete the deception, a demand was made at Madrid for the privileges of a *villa* for the mission of Esmeralda, which but a hamlet with twelve or fifteen huts. A colony composed of elements altogether heterogeneous perished by degrees. The vagabonds of the Llanos had as little taste for labour as the natives, who were compelled to live "within the sound of the bell." The former found a motive in their pride to justify their indolence. In the missions, every mulatto who is not decidedly black as an African, or copper-coloured as an Indian, calls himself a Spaniard; he belongs to the *gente de razon*,—the race endued with reason; and that reason (sometimes, it must be admitted, arrogant and indolent)