

which is known to all the inhabitants of Esmeralda,\* seems to indicate that the Orinoco must be very narrow at this point. It is generally estimated by the Indians to be only two or three hundred feet broad. They say, that the Orinoco, above the Raudal of the Guaharibos, is no longer a river, but a brook (*riachuelo*); while a well informed ecclesiastic, Fray Juan Gonzales, who had visited those countries, assured me, that the Orinoco, in the part where its farther course is no longer known, is two-thirds of the breadth of the Rio Negro near San Carlos. This opinion appears to me hardly probable; but I relate what I have collected, and affirm nothing positively.

In the rocky dike that crosses the Orinoco, forming the Raudal of the Guaharibos, Spanish soldiers pretend to have found the fine kind of saussurite (Amazon-stone), of which we have spoken. This tradition however is very uncertain; and the Indians, whom I interrogated on the subject, assured me, that the green stones, called *pedras de Macagua*† at Esmeralda, were purchased from the Guaicas and Guaharibos, who traffic with hordes much farther to the east. The same uncertainty prevails respecting these stones, as that which attaches to many other valuable productions of the Indies. On the coast, at the distance of some hundred leagues, the country where they are found is positively named; but when the traveller with difficulty penetrates into that country, he discovers that the natives are ignorant even of the name of the object of his research. It might be supposed that the amulets of saussurite found in the possession of the Indians of the Rio Negro, come from the Lower Marañon, while those that are received by the missions of the Upper Orinoco and the Rio Carony come from a country situated between the sources of the Essequibo and the Rio Branco. The opinion that this stone is taken in

\* The Amazon also is crossed twice on bridges of wood near its source in the lake Lauricocha; first north of Chavin, and then below the confluence of the Rio Aguamiras. These, the only two bridges that have been thrown over the largest river we yet know, are called *Puente de Quivilla*, and *Puente de Guancaybamba*.

† The etymology of this name, which is unknown to me, might lead to the knowledge of the spot where these stones are found. I have sought in vain the name of Macagua among the numerous tributary streams of the Tacutu, the Mahu, the Rupunury, and the Rio Trombetas.