

a soft state like paste from the little lake Amucu, though very prevalent at Angostura, is wholly without foundation. A curious geognostic discovery remains to be made in the eastern part of America, that of finding in a primitive soil a rock of euphotide containing the *piedra de Macagua*.

I shall here proceed to give some information respecting the tribes of dwarf and fair Indians, which ancient traditions have placed near the sources of the Orinoco. I had an opportunity of seeing some of these Indians at Esmeralda, and can affirm, that the short stature of the Guaicas, and the fair complexion of the Guaharibos, whom Father Caulin calls *Guaribos blancos*, have been alike exaggerated. The Guaicas, whom I measured, were in general from four feet seven inches to four feet eight inches high (old measure of France).* We were assured that the whole tribe were of this diminutive size; but we must not forget that what is called a tribe constitutes, properly speaking, but one family, owing to the exclusion of all foreign connections. The Indians of the lowest stature next to the Guaicas are the Guainares and the Poignaves. It is singular, that all these nations are found in near proximity to the Caribs, who are remarkably tall. They all inhabit the same climate, and subsist on the same aliments. They are varieties in the race, which no doubt existed previously to the settlement of these tribes, (tall and short, fair and dark brown) in the same country. The four nations of the Upper Orinoco, which appeared to me to be the fairest, are the Guaharibos of the Rio Gehette, the Guainares of the Ocamo, the Guaicas of Caño Chiguire, and the Maquiritares of the sources of the Padamo, the Jao, and the Ventuari. It being very extraordinary to see natives with a fair skin beneath a burning sky, and amid nations of a very dark hue, the Spaniards have attempted to explain this phenomenon by the following hypotheses. Some assert, that the Dutch of Surinam and the Rio Essequibo may have intermingled with the Guaharibos and the Guainares; others insist, from hatred to the Capuchins of the Carony, and the Observantins of the Orinoco, that the fair Indians are what are called in Dalmatia *muso di frate*, children whose legitimacy is somewhat doubtful. In either case the *Indios blancos* would be mestizos, that is to say, children

* About five feet three inches English measure.