

These phenomena are so much the more worthy of attention as they are observed in that great branch of the American nations generally ranked in a class totally opposite to that circumpolar branch, viz; the Tschougaz-Esquimaux,\* whose children are fair, and who acquire the Mongol or yellowish tint only from the influence of the air and the humidity. In Guiana, the hordes who live in the midst of the thickest forests are generally less tawny than those who inhabit the shores of the Orinoco, and are employed in fishing. But this slight difference, which is alike found in Europe between the artisans of towns and the cultivators of the fields or the fishermen on the coasts, in no way explains the problem of the *Indios blancos*. They are surrounded by other Indians of the woods (*Indios del monte*), who are of a reddish-brown, although now exposed to the same physical influences. The causes of these phenomena are very ancient, and we may repeat with Tacitus, "est durans originis vis."

The fair-complexioned tribes, which we had an opportunity of seeing at the mission of Esmeralda, inhabit part of a mountainous country lying between the sources of six tributaries of the Orinoco; that is to say, between the Padamo, the Jao, the Ventuari, the Erevato, the Aruy, and the Paraguay.† The Spanish and Portuguese missionaries are accustomed to designate this country more particularly

beginning of the 16th century, we see, that the discovery of America, and of a new race of men, had singularly awakened the interest of travellers respecting the varieties of our species. Now, if a black race had been mingled with copper-coloured men, as in the South-sea Islands, the *conquistadores* would not have failed to speak of it in a precise manner. Besides, the religious traditions of the Americans relate the appearance, in the heroic times, of white and bearded men as priests and legislators; but none of these traditions make mention of a black race.

\* The Chevalier Gieseke has recently confirmed all that Krantz related of the colour of the skin of the Esquimaux. That race (even in the latitude of seventy-five and seventy-six degrees, where the climate is so rigorous) is not in general so diminutive as it was long believed to be. *Ross's Voyage to the North*.

† They are six tributary streams on the right bank of the Orinoco; the first three run towards the south, or the Upper Orinoco; the three others towards the north, or the Lower Orinoco.