

Conorichite, one hundred and forty leagues further eastward, between the sources of the Rio Blanco and the Rio Essequibo, we also meet with rocks and symbolical figures. I have lately verified this curious fact, which is recorded in the journal of the traveller Hortsman, who went up the Rupunuvini, one of the tributary streams of the Essequibo. Where this river, full of small cascades, winds between the mountains of Macarana, he found, before he reached lake Amucu, "rocks covered with figures," or (as he says in Portuguese) with "varias letras." We must not take this word *letters* in its real signification. We were also shewn, near the rock Culinacari, on the banks of the Cassiquiare, and at the port of Caycara in the Lower Orinoco, traces which were believed to be regular characters. They were however only misshapen figures, representing the heavenly bodies, together with tigers, crocodiles, boas, and instruments used for making the flour of cassava. It was impossible to recognize in these 'painted rocks'* (the name by which the natives denote those masses loaded with figures) any symmetrical arrangement, or characters with regular spaces. The traces discovered in the mountains of Uruana, by the missionary Fray Ramon Bueno, approach nearer to alphabetical writing; but are nevertheless very doubtful.

Whatever may be the meaning of these figures, and with whatever view they were traced upon granite, they merit the examination of those who direct their attention to the philosophic history of our species. In travelling from the coast of Caracas towards the equator, we are at first led to believe that monuments of this kind are peculiar to the mountain-chain of Encaramada; they are found at the port of Sedeño, near Caycara,† at San Rafael del Capuchino, opposite Cabruta, and in almost every place where the granitic rock pierces the soil, in the savannah which extends from the Cerro Curiquima towards the banks of the Caura.

* In Tamanac, *tepumereme*. (*Tepu*, a stone, rock; as in Mexican, *tell*, a stone, and *tepell*, a mountain; in Turco-Tatarian, *tepe*.) The Spanish Americans also call the rock covered with sculptured figures, *piedras pintadas*; those for instance, which are found on the summit of the Paramo of Guanacas, in New Grenada, and which recall to mind the *tepumereme* of the Orinoco, the Cassiquiare, and the Rupunuvini.

† In the Mountains of the Tyrant, (*Cerros del Tirano*.)