

We have now examined a White Sea,* which the principal trunk of the Rio Branco is made to traverse; and another,† which is placed on the east of this river, and communicates with it by the Caño Pirara. A third lake‡ is figured on the west of the Rio Branco, respecting which I found recently some curious details in the manuscript journal of the surgeon Hortsman. "At the distance of two days' journey below the confluence of the Mahu (Tacutu) with the Rio Parima (Uraricuera) a lake is found on the top of a mountain. This lake is stocked with the same fish as the Rio Parima; but the waters of the former are black, and those of the latter white." May not Surville, from a vague notion of this basin, have imagined, in his map prefixed to Father Caulin's work, an Alpine lake of ten leagues in length, near which, towards the east, rise at the same time the Orinoco, and the Rio Idapa, a tributary stream of the Rio Negro? However vague may be the account of the surgeon of Hildesheim, it is impossible to admit that the mountain, which has a lake at its summit, is to the north of the parallel of $2^{\circ} 30'$: and this latitude coincides nearly with that of the Cerro Unturan. Hence it follows, that the Alpine lake of Hortsman, which has escaped the attention of D'Anville, and which is perhaps situate amid a group of mountains, lies north-east of the portage from the Idapa to the Mavaca, and south-east of the Orinoco, where it goes up above Esmeralda.

Most of the historians, who have treated of the first ages of the conquest, seem persuaded, that the name *provincias* or *pais del Dorado* denoted originally every region abounding in gold. Forgetting the precise etymology of the word El Dorado (the gilded), they have not perceived, that this tradition is a local fable, as were almost all the ancient fables of the Greeks, the Hindoos, and the Persians. The

Paraguay have long acted the same part in the southern hemisphere, as lake Parima has been made to perform in the northern. Hondius and Sanson have made the Rio de la Plata, the Rio Topajos (a tributary stream of the Amazon), the Rio Tocantines, and the Rio de San Francisco, issue from the Laguna de los Xaryes.

* That of D'Anville and La Cruz, and of the greater part of the modern maps.

† The lake of Surville, which takes the place of lake Amucu.

‡ The lake which Surville calls "Laguna tenida hasta ahora or La una Parime"