

history of 'the gilded man' belongs originally to the Andes of New Grenada, and particularly to the plains in the vicinity of their eastern side: we see it progressively advance, as I observed above, three hundred leagues toward the east-north-east, from the sources of the Caqueta to those of the Rio Branco and the Essequibo. Gold was sought in different parts of South America before 1536, without the word El Dorado having been ever pronounced, and without the belief of the existence of any other centre of civilization and wealth, than the empire of the Inca of Cuzco. Countries which now do not furnish commerce with the smallest quantities of the precious metals, the coast of Paria, Terra Firma (*Castillo del Oro*), the mountains of Santa Martha, and the isthmus of Darien, then enjoyed the same celebrity which has been more recently acquired by the auriferous lands of Sonora, Choco, and Brazil.

Diego de Ordaz (1531) and Alonzo de Herrera (1535) directed their journeys of discovery along the banks of the Lower Orinoco. The former is the famous Conquistador of Mexico, who boasted that he had taken sulphur out of the crater of the Peak of Popocatepetl, and whom the emperor Charles V. permitted to wear a burning volcano on his armorial bearings. Ordaz, named Adelantado of all the country which he could conquer between Brazil and the coast of Venezuela, which was then called the country of the German Company of Welsers (Belzares) of Augsburg, began his expedition by the mouth of the Marañon. He there saw, in the hands of the natives, "emeralds as big as a man's fist." They were, no doubt, pieces of that saussurite jade, or compact feldspar, which we brought home from the Orinoco, and which La Condamine found in abundance at the mouth of the Rio Topayos. The Indians related to Diego de Ordaz, "that on going up during a certain number of suns toward the west, he would find a large rock (peña) of green stone;" but before they reached this pretended mountain of emerald (rocks of euphotide?) a shipwreck put an end to all farther discovery. The Spaniards saved themselves with difficulty in two small vessels. They hastened to get out of the mouth of the Amazon; and the currents, which in those parts run with violence to the