

had no doubt that these wandering Spaniards were men unfortunately shipwrecked in the expedition of Ordaz. He crossed the savannahs of San Juan de los Llanos, which were said to abound in gold; and made a long stay at an Indian village called *Pueblo de Nuestra Señora*, and afterwards La Fragua, south-east of the Paramo de la Suma Paz. I have been on the western back of this group of mountains, at Fusagasuga, and there heard that the plains by which they are skirted toward the east, still enjoy some celebrity for wealth among the natives. Speier found in the populous village of La Fragua a *Casa del Sol* (temple of the sun), and a convent of virgins similar to those of Peru and New Granada. Were these the consequence of a migration of religious rites towards the east? or must we admit that the plains of San Juan were their first cradle? Tradition, indeed, records that Bochica, the legislator of New Granada and high-priest of Iraca, had gone up from the plains of the east to the table-land of Bogotá. But Bochica being at once the offspring and the symbol of the sun, his history may contain allegories that are merely astrological. Speier, pursuing his way toward the south, and crossing the two branches of the Guaviare, which are the Ariare and the Guayavero (Guayare or Canicamare), arrived on the banks of the great Rio Papamene or Caqueta. The resistance he met with during a whole year in the province de los Choques, put an end, in 1537, to this memorable expedition. Nicolas Federmann and Geronimo de Ortal (1536), who went from Macarapana and the mouth of the Rio Neveri, followed (1535) the traces of Jorge de Espira. The former sought for gold in the Rio Grande de la Magdalena; the latter endeavoured to discover a temple of the sun (*Casa del Sol*) on the banks of the Meta. Ignorant of the idiom of the natives, they seemed to see everywhere, at the foot of the Cordilleras, the reflexion of the greatness of the temples of Iraca (Sogamozo), which was then the centre of the civilization of Cundinamarca.

I have now examined, in a geographical point of view, the expeditions on the Orinoco, and in a western and southern direction on the eastern back of the Andes, before the tradition of El Dorado was spread among the conquistadores. This tradition, as we have noticed above, had its origin in