

tinually described Dorado as easy to be reached, and situate at no considerable distance. It was like a phantom that seemed to flee before the Spaniards, and to call on them unceasingly. It is in the nature of man, wandering on the earth, to figure to himself happiness beyond the region which he knows. El Dorado, similar to Atlas and the islands of the Hesperides, disappeared by degrees from the domain of geography, and entered that of mythological fictions.

I shall not here relate the numerous enterprises which were undertaken for the conquest of this imaginary country. Unquestionably we are indebted to them in great part for our knowledge of the interior of America; they have been useful to geography, as errors and daring hypotheses are often to the search of truth: but in the discussion on which we are employed, it is incumbent on me to rest only upon those facts which have had the most direct influence on the construction of ancient and modern maps. Hernan Perez de Quesada, after the departure of his brother the Adelantado for Europe, sought anew (1539) but this time in the mountainous land north-east of Bogotá, the temple of the sun (Casa del Sol), of which Geronimo de Ortal had heard spoken in 1536 on the banks of the Meta. The worship of the sun introduced by Bochica, and the celebrity of the sanctuary of Iraca, or Sogamozo, gave rise to those confused reports of temples and idols of massy gold; but on the mountains as in the plains, the traveller believed himself to be always at a distance from them, because the reality never corresponded with the chimerical dreams of the imagination. Francisco de Orellana, after having vainly sought El Dorado with Pizarro in the *Provincia de los Canelos*, and on the auriferous banks of the Napo, went down (1540) the great river of the Amazon. He found there, between the mouths of the Javari and the Rio de la Trinidad (Yupura?) a province rich in gold, called Machiparo (Muchifaro), in the vicinity of that of the Aomaguas, or Omaguas. These notions contributed to carry El Dorado toward the south-east, for the names *Omaguas* (Om-aguas, Aguas), *Dit-Aguas*, and *Papamene*, designated the same country—that which Jorge de Espira had discovered in his expedition to the Caqueta. The *Omaguas*, the *Manaos* or *Manoas*, and the *Uaypes* (Uaupes or Guayupes) live in the plains on the