

capital of the cacique of Aromaja, and the first city of the imaginary empire of Guyana."

As these often-inundated lands have been at all times inhabited by nations of Carib race, who carried on a very active inland trade with the most distant regions, we must not be surprised that more gold was found here in the hands of the Indians than elsewhere. The natives of the coast did not employ this metal in the form of ornaments or amulets only; but also as a medium of exchange. It is not extraordinary, therefore, that gold has disappeared on the coast of Paria, and among the nations of the Orinoco, since their inland communications have been impeded by the Europeans. The natives who have remained independent are in our days, no doubt, more wretched, more indolent, and in a ruder state, than they were before the conquest. The king of Morequito, whose son Raleigh took to England, had visited Cumana in 1594, to exchange a great quantity of images of massy gold for iron tools, and European merchandise. The unexpected appearance of an Indian chief augmented the celebrity of the riches of the Orinoco. It was supposed that El Dorado must be near the country from which the king of Morequito came; and as this country was often inundated, and rivers vaguely called great seas, or great basins of water, El Dorado must be on the banks of a lake. It was forgotten that the gold brought by the Caribs, and other trading people, was as little the produce of their soil as the diamonds of Brazil and India are the produce of the regions of Europe, where they are most abundant. The expedition of Berrio, which had increased in number during the stay of the vessels at Cumana, La Margareta, and the island of Trinidad, proceeded by Morequito (near Vieja Guayana) towards the Rio Paragua, a tributary stream of the Carony; but sickness, the ferocity of the natives, and the want of subsistence, opposed invincible obstacles to the progress of the Spaniards. They all perished; except about thirty, who returned in a deplorable state to the post of Santo Thomé.

These disasters did not calm the ardour displayed during the first half of the 17th century in the search of El Dorado. The governor of the island of Trinidad, Antonio de Berrio, became the prisoner of Sir Walter Raleigh, in the cele-