

voyage, on approaching the coast of Cariay (Poyais, or Mosquito Coast), Veragua, and the Isthmus, he believed himself to be near the mouth of the Ganges.* These geographical illusions, this mysterious veil, which enveloped the first discoveries, contributed to magnify every object, and to fix the attention of Europe on regions, the very names of which are, to us, scarcely known. New Cadiz, the principal seat of the pearl-fishery, was on an island which has again become uninhabited. The extremity of the rocky coast of Paria is also a desert. Several towns were founded at the mouth of the Rio Atrato, by the names of Antigua del Darien, Uraba, or San Sebastian de Buenavista. In these spots, so celebrated at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the historians of the conquest tell us that the flower of the Castilian heroes were found assembled: thence Balboa set out to discover the South Sea; Pizarro marched from thence to conquer and ravage Peru; and Pedro de Cieça constantly followed the chain of the Andes, by Antioquia, Popayan, and Cuzco, as far as La Plata, after having gone 900 leagues by land. These towns of Darien are destroyed; some ruins scattered on the hills of Uraba, the fruit-trees of Europe mixed with native trees, are all that mark to the traveller the spots on which those towns once stood. In almost all Spanish America the first lands peopled by the Conquistadores, have retrograded into barbarism.†

* “Tambien dicen que la mar baxa a Ciguare, y de alli a diez jornadas es el *Rio de Guangues*: para que estas tierras estan con Veragua como Tortosa con Fuenterabia ò Pisa con Venecia.” [Also it is said that the sea lowers at Ciguara, and from thence it is a ten days’ journey to the river Ganges; for these lands are, with reference to Veragua, like Tortosa with respect to Fuenterabia, or Pisa, with respect to Venice.]—These words are taken from the *Lettera Rarissima* of Columbus, of which the original Spanish was lately found, and published by the learned M. Navarrete, in his *Coleccion de Viages*, vol. i, p. 299.

† In carefully collating the testimonies of the historians of the Conquest, some contradictions are observed in the periods assigned to the foundation of the towns of Darien. Pedro de Cieça, who had been on the spot, affirms, that under the government of Alonzo de Ojeda and Nicuessa, the town of Nuestra Señora Santa Maria el Antigua del Darien was founded on the western coast of the Gulf or Culata de Uraba, in 1509; and that later (*despues desto passado*) Ojeda passed to the eastern coast of the Culata to construct the town of San Sebastian de Uraba. The former, called by abbreviation Ciudad del Antigua, had soon a population