

There is no isthmus of Panama, but a passage, which permits of a direct navigation from Europe to India. The great southern island (South America) bears the name of *Terra de Pareas*, bounded by two rivers, the Rio Lareno and the Rio Formoso. These *Pareas* are, no doubt, the inhabitants of *Paria*, a name which Christopher Columbus had already heard in 1498, and which was long applied to a great part of America. Bishop Geraldini says clearly, in a letter addressed to Pope Leo X, in 1516: "*Insula illa, quæ Europa et Asia est major, quam indocti Continentem Asiæ appellant, et alii Americam vel Pariam nuncupant* [that island, larger than Europe and Asia joined together, which the unlearned call the continent of Asia, and others America or Paria].*" I find in the map of the world of 1508 no trace whatever of the Orinoco. This river appears, for the first time, by the name of Rio Dolce, on the celebrated map constructed in 1529 by Diego Ribeyro, cosmographer of the emperor Charles V, which was published, with a learned commentary, by M. Sprengel, in 1795. Neither Columbus (1498) nor Alonzo de Ojeda, accompanied by Amerigo Vespucci (1499), had seen the real mouth of the Orinoco; they confounded it with the northern opening of the Gulf of Paria, to which they attributed (by an exaggeration so common to the navigators of that time, an immense volume of fresh water. It was Vicente Yanez Pinçon, who, after having discovered the mouth of the Rio Marañon,† first saw, in 1500, that of the Orinoco. He called this river Rio Dolce—a name which, since Ribeyro, was long preserved on our maps, and which has sometimes been given erroneously to the Maroni and to the Essequibo.

The great Lake Parima did not appear on our maps‡ till

* Alexandri Geraldini Itinerarium, p. 250.

† The name of *Marañon* was known fifty-nine years before the expedition of Lopez de Aguirre; the denomination of the river is therefore erroneously attributed to the nickname of *marañes* (hogs), which this adventurer gave his companions in going down the river Amazon. Was not this vulgar jest rather an allusion to the Indian name of the river?

‡ I find no trace of it on a very rare map, dedicated to Richard Hakluyt, and constructed on the meridian of Toledo. (*Novus Orbis*, Paris, 1587.) In this map, published before the voyage of Quiros, a group of islands is marked (*Infortunatæ Insulæ*) where the Friendly Islands actually are. Ortelius (1570) already knew them. Were they islands seen by Magellan?