

there was a new world to be shared out, where a bold Soldier like himself, with sword and buckler, might readily carve out new fortune for himself. Besides he had now amassed wealth to assist him in his plans, and, like many of the early discoverers, his brain was teeming with the most romantic enterprises. He had conceived the idea that there was yet a third world to be discovered, and he hoped to be the first to reach its shores, and thus secure a renown equal to that of Columbus.

While cogitating these things, and considering which way he should strike forth in the unexplored regions around him, he met with some old Indians, who gave him tidings of a country which promised, not merely to satisfy the cravings of his ambition, but to realize the fondest dreams of the poets. They assured him that, far to the north, (perhaps as far north as Carratraca) there existed a land abounding in gold and in all manner of delights: but, above all, possessing a river of such wonderful virtue, that whoever bathed in it would be restored to youth! They added, that in times past, before the arrival of the Spaniards, a large party of the natives of Cuba had departed northwards in search of this happy land and this river of life, and having never returned, it was concluded that they were flourishing in renovated youth, detained by the pleasures of that enchanting country.

Here was the dream of the alchemist realized! One had but to find this gifted land, and revel in the enjoyment of boundless riches and perennial youth; nay, some of the ancient Indians declared that it was not