

in the narrow circle of sedentary life appears insipid. The taste for herborisation, the study of geology, rapid excursions to Holland, England, and France, with the celebrated Mr. George Forster, who had the happiness to accompany captain Cook in his second expedition round the globe, contributed to give a determined direction to the plan of travels which I had formed at eighteen years of age. No longer deluded by the agitation of a wandering life, I was anxious to contemplate nature in all her variety of wild and stupendous scenery; and the hope of collecting some facts useful to the advancement of science, incessantly impelled my wishes towards the luxuriant regions of the torrid zone. As personal circumstances then prevented me from executing the projects by which I was so powerfully influenced, I had leisure to prepare myself during six years for the observations I proposed to make on the New Continent, as well as to visit different parts of Europe, and to explore the lofty chain of the Alps, the structure of which I might afterwards compare with that of the Andes of Quito and of Peru.

I had traversed a part of Italy in 1795, but had not been able to visit the volcanic regions of Naples and Sicily; and I regretted leaving Europe without having seen Vesuvius, Stromboli, and Etna. I felt, that in order to form a proper judgment of many geological phenomena, especially of the nature of the rocks of trap-formation, it was necessary to examine the phenomena presented by burning volcanoes. I determined therefore to return to Italy in the month of November, 1797. I made a long stay at Vienna, where the fine collections of exotic plants, and the friendship of Messrs. de Jacquin, and Joseph van der Schott, were highly useful to my preparatory studies. I travelled with M. Leopold von Buch, through several cantons of Salzburg and Styria, countries alike interesting to the landscape-painter and the geologist; but just when I was about to cross the Tyrolese Alps, the war then raging in Italy obliged me to abandon the project of going to Naples.

A short time before, a gentleman passionately fond of the fine arts, and who had visited the coasts of Greece and Illyria to inspect their monuments, made me a proposal to accompany him in an expedition to Upper Egypt. This