

of attention because vessels returning to Europe, sometimes wait impatiently for a sight of these mountains, to rectify their longitude; and think themselves much farther off than they really are, when in fine weather these peaks are not perceptible at distances where the angles subtended must be very considerable. The constitution of the atmosphere has a great influence on the visibility of distant objects. It may be admitted, that in general the peak of Teneriffe is seldom seen at a great distance, in the warm and dry months of July and August; and that, on the contrary, it is seen at very extraordinary distances in the months of January and February, when the sky is slightly clouded, and immediately after a heavy rain, or a few hours before it falls. It appears that the transparency of the air is prodigiously increased, as we have already observed, when a certain quantity of water is uniformly diffused through the atmosphere. Independent of these observations, it is not astonishing, that the peak of Teyde should be seldomer visible at a very remote distance, than the summits of the Andes, to which, during so long a time, my observations were directed. This peak, inferior in height to those parts of the chain of Mount Atlas at the foot of which is the city of Morocco, is not, like those points, covered with perpetual snows. The Piton, or Sugar-loaf, which terminates the peak, no doubt reflects a great quantity of light, owing to the whitish colour of the pumice-stone thrown up by the crater; but the height of that little truncated cone does not form a twenty-second part of the total elevation. The flanks of the volcano are covered either with blocks of black and scorified lava, or with a luxuriant vegetation, the masses of which reflect the less light, as the leaves of the trees are separated from each other by shadows of more considerable extent than that of the part enlightened.

Hence it results that, setting aside the Piton, the peak of Teyde belongs to that class of mountains, which, according to the expression of Bouger, are seen at considerable distances only in a *negative manner*, because they intercept the light which is transmitted to us from the extreme limits of the atmosphere; and we perceive their existence only on account of the difference of intensity subsisting between the aerial light which surrounds them, and that which is reflected