

nificent spectacle, and at the same instant we saw four English vessels lying to, and very near our stern. We had passed without being perceived, and the same mist which had concealed the peak from our view, had saved us from the risk of being carried back to Europe. The Pizarro stood in as close as possible to the fort, to be under its protection. It was on this shore, that, in the landing attempted by the English two years before our arrival, in July 1797, admiral Nelson had his arm carried off by a cannon-ball.

The situation of the town of Santa Cruz is very similar to that of La Guayra, the most frequented port of the province of Caraccas. The heat is excessive in both places, and from the same causes; but the aspect of Santa Cruz is more gloomy. On a narrow and sandy beach, houses of dazzling whiteness, with flat roofs, and windows without glass, are built close against a wall of black perpendicular rock, devoid of vegetation. A fine mole, built of freestone, and the public walk planted with poplars, are the only objects which break the sameness of the landscape. The view of the peak, as it presents itself above Santa Cruz, is much less picturesque than that we enjoy from the port of Orotava. There, a highly cultured and smiling plain presents a pleasing contrast to the wild aspect of the volcano. From the groups of palm trees and bananas which line the coast, to the region of the arbutus, the laurel, and the pine, the volcanic rock is crowned with luxuriant vegetation. We easily conceive how the inhabitants, even of the beautiful climates of Greece and Italy, might fancy they recognised one of the Fortunate Isles in the western part of Teneriffe. The eastern side, that of Santa Cruz, on the contrary, is every where stamped with sterility. The summit of the peak is not more arid than the promontory of basaltic lava, which stretches towards the point of Naga, and on which succulent plants, springing up in the clefts of the rocks, scarcely indicate a preparation of soil. At the port of Orotava, the top of the Piton subtends an angle in height of more than eleven degrees and a half; while at the mole of Santa Cruz* the angle scarcely exceeds $4^{\circ} 36'$.

Notwithstanding this difference, and though in the latter

* The oblique distances from the top of the volcano to Orotava and to Santa Cruz are nearly 8,600 toises and 22,500 toises.