

from the ground, and the extent of the plain. We suffered much from the suffocating dust of the pumice-stone, in which we were continually enveloped. In the midst of this plain are tufts of the *retama*, which is the *Spartium nubigenum* of Aiton. M. de Martinière, one of the botanists who perished in the expedition of Lapérouse, wished to introduce this beautiful shrub into Languedoc, where firewood is very scarce. It grows to the height of nine feet, and is loaded with odoriferous flowers, with which the goat hunters, that we met in our road, had decorated their hats. The goats of the peak, which are of a deep brown colour, are reckoned delicious food; they browse on the spartium, and have run wild in the deserts from time immemorial. They have been transported to Madeira, where they are preferred to the goats of Europe.

As far as the rock of Gayta, or the entrance of the extensive Llano del Retama, the peak of Teneriffe is covered with beautiful vegetation. There are no traces of recent devastation. We might have imagined ourselves scaling the side of some volcano, the fire of which had been extinguished as remotely as that of Monte Cavo, near Rome; but scarcely had we reached the plain covered with pumice-stone, when the landscape changed its aspect, and at every step we met with large blocks of obsidian thrown out by the volcano. Everything here speaks perfect solitude. A few goats and rabbits only bound across the plain. The barren region of the peak is nine square leagues; and as the lower regions viewed from this point retrograde in the distance, the island appears an immense heap of torrefied matter, hemmed round by a scanty border of vegetation.

From the region of the *Spartium nubigenum* we passed through narrow defiles, and small ravines hollowed at a very remote time by the torrents, first arriving at a more elevated plain (el Monton de Trigo), then at the place where we intended to pass the night. This station, which is more than 1530 toises above the coast, bears the name of the English Halt (Estancia de los Ingleses*), no doubt because most of

* This denomination was in use as early as the beginning of the last century. Mr. Eden, who corrupts all Spanish words, as do most travellers in our own times, calls it the *Stancha*: it is the Station des Rochers of M. Borda, as is proved by the barometrical heights there observed.