

the travellers, who formerly visited the peak, were Englishmen. Two inclined rocks form a kind of cavern, which affords a shelter from the winds. This point, which is higher than the summit of the Canigou, can be reached on the backs of mules; and here has ended the expedition of numbers of travellers, who on leaving Orotava hoped to have ascended to the brink of the crater. Though in the midst of summer, and under an African sky, we suffered from cold during the night. The thermometer descended as low as to five degrees. Our guides made a large fire with the dry branches of retama. Having neither tents nor cloaks, we lay down on some masses of rock, and were singularly incommoded by the flame and smoke, which the wind drove towards us. We had attempted to form a kind of screen with cloths tied together, but our enclosure took fire, which we did not perceive till the greater part had been consumed by the flames. We had never passed a night on a point so elevated, and we then little imagined that we should, one day, on the ridge of the Cordilleras, inhabit towns higher than the summit of the volcano we were to scale on the morrow. As the temperature diminished, the peak became covered with thick clouds. The approach of night interrupts the play of the ascending current, which, during the day, rises from the plains towards the high regions of the atmosphere; and the air, in cooling, loses its capacity of suspending water. A strong northerly wind chased the clouds; the moon at intervals, shooting through the vapours, exposed its disk on a firmament of the darkest blue; and the view of the volcano threw a majestic character over the nocturnal scenery. Sometimes the peak was entirely hidden from our eyes by the fog, at other times it broke upon us in terrific proximity; and, like an enormous pyramid, threw its shadow over the clouds rolling beneath our feet.

About three in the morning, by the sombrous light of a few fir torches, we started on our journey to the summit of the Piton. We scaled the volcano on the north-east side, where the declivities are extremely steep; and after two

These heights were in 1803, according to M. Cordier, 19 inches 9·5 lines; and in 1776, according to Messrs. Borda and Varela, 19 inches 9·8 lines; the barometer at Orotava keeping within nearly a line at the same height.