

the atmosphere. Notwithstanding the great distance, we could distinguish not only the houses, the sails of the vessels, and the trunks of the trees, but we could discern the vivid colouring of the vegetation of the plains. These phenomena are owing not only to the height of the site, but to the peculiar modifications of the air in warm climates. In every zone, an object placed on a level with the sea, and viewed in a horizontal direction, appears less luminous, than when seen from the top of a mountain, where vapours arrive after passing through strata of air of decreasing density. Differences equally striking are produced by the influence of climate. The surface of a lake or large river is less resplendent, when we see it at an equal distance, from the top of the higher Alps of Switzerland, than when we view it from the summit of the Cordilleras of Peru or of Mexico. In proportion as the air is pure and serene, the solution of the vapours becomes more complete, and the light loses less in its passage. When from the shores of the Pacific we ascend the elevated plain of Quito, or that of Antisana, we are struck for some days by the nearness at which we imagine we see objects which are actually seven or eight leagues distant. The peak of Teyde has not the advantage of being situated in the equinoctial region; but the dryness of the columns of air which rise perpetually above the neighbouring plains of Africa, and which the eastern winds convey with rapidity, gives to the atmosphere of the Canary Islands a transparency which not only surpasses that of the air of Naples and Sicily, but perhaps exceeds the purity of the sky of Quito and Peru. This transparency may be regarded as one of the chief causes of the beauty of landscape scenery in the torrid zone; it heightens the splendour of the vegetable colouring, and contributes to the magical effect of its harmonies and contrasts. If the mass of light, which circulates about objects, fatigues the external senses during a part of the day, the inhabitant of the southern climates has his compensation in moral enjoyment. A lucid clearness in the conceptions, and a serenity of mind, correspond with the transparency of the surrounding atmosphere. We feel these impressions without going beyond the boundaries of Europe. I appeal to travellers who have visited countries rendered famous by the great