

Notwithstanding the heat we felt in our feet on the edge of the crater, the cone of ashes remains covered with snow during several months in winter. It is probable, that under the cap of snow considerable hollows are found, like those existing under the glaciers of Switzerland, the temperature of which is constantly less elevated than that of the soil on which they repose. The cold and violent wind, which blew from the time of sunrise, induced us to seek shelter at the foot of the Piton. Our hands and faces were nearly frozen, while our boots were burnt by the soil on which we walked. We descended in the space of a few minutes the Sugar-loaf which we had scaled with so much toil; and this rapidity was in part involuntary, for we often rolled down on the ashes. It was with regret that we quitted this solitude, this domain where Nature reigns in all her majesty. We consoled ourselves with the hope of once again visiting the Canary Islands, but this, like many other plans we then formed, has never been executed.

We traversed the Malpays but slowly; for the foot finds no sure foundation on the loose blocks of lava. Nearer the station of the rocks, the descent becomes extremely difficult; the compact short-swarded turf is so slippery, that we were obliged to incline our bodies continually backward, in order to avoid falling. In the sandy plain of Retama, the thermometer rose to 22.5° ; and this heat seemed to us suffocating in comparison with the cold, which we had suffered from the air on the summit of the volcano. We were absolutely without water; our guides, not satisfied with drinking clandestinely the little supply of malmsey wine, for which we were indebted to Don Cologan's kindness, had broken our water jars. Happily the bottle which contained the air of the crater escaped unhurt.

We at length enjoyed the refreshing breeze in the beautiful region of the arborescent erica and fern; and we were enveloped in a thick bed of clouds stationary at six hundred toises above the plain. The clouds having dispersed, we remarked a phenomenon which afterwards became familiar to us on the declivities of the Cordilleras. Small currents of air chased trains of cloud with unequal velocity, and in opposite directions: they bore the appearance of streamlets of water in rapid motion and flowing in all directions, amidst a