

and buried sea-shells on the summits of the higher Alps. Doubtless, in those remote times which preceded the existence of the human race, the raised crust of the globe produced those domes of trappean porphyry, those hills of isolated basalt on vast elevated plains, those solid nuclei which are clothed in the modern lavas of the Peak, of Etna, and of Cotopaxi. The volcanic revolutions have succeeded each other after long intervals, and at very different periods: of this we see the vestiges in the transition mountains, in the secondary strata, and in those of alluvium. Volcanoes of earlier date than the sandstone and calcareous rocks have been for ages extinguished; those which are yet in activity are in general surrounded only with breccias and modern tufas; but nothing hinders us from admitting, that the archipelago of the Canaries may exhibit some real rocks of secondary formation, if we recollect that subterranean fires have been there rekindled in the midst of a system of basalts and very ancient lavas.

We seek in vain in the *Periplus* of Hanno or of Scylax for the first written notions on the eruptions of the Peak of Teneriffe. Those navigators sailed timidly along the coast, anchoring every evening in some bay, and had no knowledge of a volcano distant fifty-six leagues from the coast of Africa. Hanno nevertheless relates, that he saw torrents of light, which seemed to fall on the sea; that every night the coast was covered with fire; and that the great mountain, called the *Car of the Gods*, appeared to throw up sheets of flame, which rose even to the clouds. But this mountain, situated northward of the island of the Gorilli, formed the western extremity of the Atlas chain; and it is also very uncertain whether the flames seen by Hanno were the effect of some volcanic eruption, or whether they must be attributed to the custom, common to many nations, of setting fire to the forests and dry grass of the savannahs. In our own days similar doubts were entertained by the naturalists, who, in the voyage of d'Entrecasteaux, saw the island of Amsterdam covered with a thick smoke. On the coast of the Caracas, trains of reddish fire, fed by the burning grass, appeared to me, for several nights, under the delusive semblance of a current of lava, descending from the mountains, and dividing itself into several branches.