

one hemisphere to the other, we see those stars, which we have contemplated from our infancy, progressively sink, and finally disappear. Nothing awakens in the traveller a livelier remembrance of the immense distance by which he is separated from his country, than the aspect of an unknown firmament. The grouping of the stars of the first magnitude, some scattered nebulae, rivalling in splendour the milky way, and tracts of space remarkable for their extreme blackness, give a peculiar physiognomy to the southern sky. This sight fills with admiration even those who, uninstructed in the several branches of physical science, feel the same emotion of delight in the contemplation of the heavenly vault, as in the view of a beautiful landscape, or a majestic site. A traveller needs not to be a botanist, to recognize the torrid zone by the mere aspect of its vegetation. Without having acquired any notions of astronomy, without any acquaintance with the celestial charts of Flamstead and De la Caille, he feels he is not in Europe, when he sees the immense constellation of the Ship, or the phosphorescent Clouds of Magellan, arise on the horizon. The heavens and the earth,—everything in the equinoctial regions, presents an exotic character.

The lower regions of the air were loaded with vapours for some days. We saw distinctly for the first time the Southern Cross only on the night of the 4th of July, in the sixteenth degree of latitude. It was strongly inclined, and appeared from time to time between the clouds, the centre of which, furrowed by uncondensed lightnings, reflected a silvery light. If a traveller may be permitted to speak of his personal emotions, I shall add, that on that night I experienced the realization of one of the dreams of my early youth.

When we begin to fix our eyes on geographical maps, and to read the narratives of navigators, we feel for certain countries and climates a sort of predilection, which we know not how to account for at a more advanced period of life. These impressions, however, exercise a considerable influence over our determinations; and from a sort of instinct we endeavour to connect ourselves with objects on which the mind has long been fixed as by a secret charm. At a period when I studied the heavens, not with the intention of devoting myself to astronomy, but only to acquire a knowledge of