

that they inspire the greatest confidence. Their habits are identical with those of the beasts of burden in Switzerland and the Pyrenees. In proportion as a country is wild, the instinct of domestic animals improves in address and sagacity. When the mules feel themselves in danger, they stop, turning their heads to the right and to the left; and the motion of their ears seems to indicate that they reflect on the decision they ought to take. Their resolution is slow, but always just, if it be spontaneous; that is to say, if it be not thwarted or hastened by the imprudence of the traveller. On the frightful roads of the Andes, during journeys of six or seven months across mountains furrowed by torrents, the intelligence of horses and beasts of burden is manifested in an astonishing manner. Thus the mountaineers are heard to say, "I will not give you the mule whose step is the easiest, but the one which is most intelligent (*la mas racional*).". This popular expression, dictated by long experience, bears stronger evidence against the theory of animated machines, than all the arguments of speculative philosophy.

When we had reached the highest point of the ridge or *cuchilla* of Guanaguans, an interesting spectacle unfolded itself before us. We saw comprehended in one view the vast savannahs or meadows of Maturin and of the Rio Tigre;* the peak of the Turimiquiri;† and an infinite number of parallel ridges, which, seen at a distance, looked like the waves of the sea. On the north-east opens the valley in which is situated the convent of Caripe. The aspect of this valley is peculiarly attractive, for being shaded by forests, it forms a strong contrast with the nudity of the neighbouring mountains, which are bare of trees, and covered with gramineous plants. We found the absolute height of the *Cuchilla* to be 548 toises.

Descending from the ridge by a winding path, we entered into a completely woody country. The soil is covered with moss, and a new species of *drosera*,§ which by its form reminded us of the *drosera* of the Alps. The thickness of the forests, and the force of vegetation, augmented

* These natural meadows are part of the llanos or immense steppes bordered by the Orinoco.

† El Cucurucho.

§ *Drosera tenella*.