

Spain. With good mules it takes but three hours to go from the port of La Guayra to Caracas; and only two hours to return. With loaded mules, or on foot, the journey is from four to five hours. The road runs along a ridge of rocks extremely steep, and after passing the stations bearing respectively the names of Torre Quemada, Curucuti, and Salto, we arrive at a large inn (La Venta) built at six hundred toises above the level of the sea. The name Torre Quemada, or Burnt Tower, indicates the sensation that is felt in descending towards La Guayra. A suffocating heat is reflected from the walls of rock, and especially from the barren plains on which the traveller looks down. On this road, as on that from Vera Cruz to Mexico, and wherever on a rapid declivity the climate changes, the increase of muscular strength and the sensation of well-being, which we experience as we advance into strata of cooler air, have always appeared to me less striking than the feeling of languor and debility which pervades the frame, when we descend towards the burning plains of the coast. But such is the organization of man; and even in the moral world, we are less soothed by that which ameliorates our condition than annoyed by a new sensation of discomfort.

From Curucuti to Salto the ascent is somewhat less laborious. The sinuosities of the way render the declivity easier, as in the old road over Mont Cenis. The Salto (or Leap) is a crevice, which is crossed by a draw-bridge. Fortifications crown the summit of the mountain. At La Venta the thermometer at noon stood at 19.3° , when at La Guayra it kept up at the same hour at 26.2° . La Venta enjoys some celebrity in Europe and in the United States, for the beauty of its surrounding scenery. When the clouds permit, this spot affords a magnificent view of the sea, and the neighbouring coasts. An horizon of more than twenty-two leagues radius is visible; the white and barren shore reflects a dazzling mass of light; and the spectator beholds at his feet Cabo Blanco, the village of Maiquetia with its cocoa-trees, La Guayra, and the vessels in the port. But I found this view far more extraordinary, when the sky was not serene, and when trains of clouds, strongly illumined on their upper surface, seemed projected like floating islands on the ocean. Strata of vapour, hovering at different