

accompanied us, or perhaps the slaves had made free with our provisions on the way; be that as it may, we found nothing but olives, and scarcely any bread. Horace, in his retreat at Tibur, never boasted of a repast more light and frugal; but olives, which might have afforded a satisfactory meal to a poet, devoted to study, and leading a sedentary life, appeared an aliment by no means sufficiently substantial for travellers climbing mountains. We had watched the greater part of the night, and we walked for nine hours without finding a single spring. Our guides were discouraged; they wished to go back, and we had great difficulty in preventing them.

In the midst of the mist I made trial of the electrometer of Volta, armed with a smoking match. Though very near a thick wood of heliconias, I obtained very sensible signs of atmospheric electricity. It often varied from positive to negative, its intensity changing every instant. These variations, and the conflict of several small currents of air, which divided the mist, and transformed it into clouds, the borders of which were visible, appeared to me infallible prognostics of a change in the weather. It was only two o'clock in the afternoon; we entertained some hope of reaching the eastern summit of the Silla before sunset, and of re-descending into the valley separating the two peaks, intending there to pass the night, to light a great fire, and to make our negroes construct a hut with the leaves of the heliconia. We sent off half of our servants with orders to hasten the next morning to meet us, not with olives, but with a supply of salt beef.

We had scarcely made these arrangements when the east wind began to blow violently from the sea. The thermometer rose to 12.5° . It was no doubt an ascending wind, which, by heightening the temperature, dissolved the vapours. In less than two minutes the clouds dispersed, and the two domes of the Silla appeared to us singularly near. We opened the barometer in the lowest part of the hollow that separates the two summits, near a little pool of very muddy water. Here, as in the West India Islands, marshy plains are found at great elevations; not because the woody mountains attract the clouds, but because they condense the vapours by the effect of nocturnal refrigeration, occasioned