

by the radiation of heat from the ground, and from the parenchyma of the leaves. The mercury was at 21 inches 5·7 lines. We shaped our course direct to the eastern summit. The obstruction caused by the vegetation gradually diminished; it was, however, necessary to cut down some heliconias; but these arborescent plants were not now very thick or high. The peaks of the Silla themselves, as we have several times mentioned, are covered only with gramina and small shrubs of befaria. Their barrenness, however, is not owing to their height: the limit of trees in this region is four hundred toises higher; since, judging according to the analogy of other mountains, this limit would be found here only at a height of eighteen hundred toises. The absence of large trees on the two rocky summits of the Silla may be attributed to the aridity of the soil, the violence of the winds blowing from the sea, and the conflagrations so frequent in all the mountains of the equinoctial region.

To reach the eastern peak, which is the highest, it is necessary to approach as near as possible the great precipice which descends towards Caravalleda and the coast. The gneiss as far as this spot preserves its lamellar texture and its primitive direction; but where we climbed the summit of the Silla, we found it had passed into granite. Its texture becomes granular; the mica, less frequent, is more unequally spread through the rock. Instead of garnets we met with a few solitary crystals of hornblende. It is, however, not a syenite, but rather a granite of new formation. We were three quarters of an hour in reaching the summit of the pyramid. This part of the way is not dangerous, provided the traveller carefully examines the stability of each fragment of rock on which he places his foot. The granite superposed on the gneiss does not present a regular separation into beds: it is divided by clefts, which often cross one another at right angles. Prismatic blocks, one foot wide and twelve long, stand out from the ground obliquely, and appear on the edges of the precipice like enormous beams suspended over the abyss.

Having arrived at the summit, we enjoyed, for a few minutes only, the serenity of the sky. The eye ranged over a vast extent of country: looking down to the north