

was the sea, and to the south, the fertile valley of Caracas. The barometer was at 20 inches 7·6 lines; the thermometer at 13·7°. We were at thirteen hundred and fifty toises of elevation. We gazed on an extent of sea, the radius of which was thirty-six leagues. Persons who are affected by looking downward from a considerable height should remain at the centre of the small flat which crowns the eastern summit of the Silla. The mountain is not very remarkable for height: it is nearly eighty toises lower than the Canigou; but it is distinguished among all the mountains I have visited by an enormous precipice on the side next the sea. The coast forms only a narrow border; and looking from the summit of the pyramid on the houses of Caravalleda, this wall of rocks seems, by an optical illusion, to be nearly perpendicular. The real slope of the declivity appeared to me, according to an exact calculation, 53° 28'.* The mean slope of the peak of Teneriffe is scarcely 12° 30'. A precipice of six or seven thousand feet, like that of the Silla of Caracas, is a phenomenon far more rare than is generally believed by those who cross mountains without measuring their height, their bulk, and their slope. Since the experiments on the fall of bodies, and on their deviation to the south-east, have been resumed in several parts of Europe, a rock of two hundred and fifty toises of perpendicular elevation has been in vain sought for among all the Alps of Switzerland. The declivity of Mont Blanc towards the Allée Blanche does not even reach an angle of 45°; though in the greater number of geological works, Mont Blanc is described as perpendicular on the south side.

At the Silla of Caracas, the enormous northern cliff is partly covered with vegetation, notwithstanding the extreme steepness of its slope. Tufts of *befaria* and *andromedas* appear as if suspended from the rock. The little valley which separates the domes towards the south, stretches in the direction of the sea. Alpine plants fill this hollow; and, not confined to the ridge of the mountain, they follow the sinuosities of the ravine. It would seem as if torrents

* Observations of the latitude give for the horizontal distance between the foot of the mountain near Caravalleda, and the vertical line passing through its summit, scarcely 1000 toises.