

cealed from us the view of the town of Caracas; but we distinguished the nearest houses, the villages of Chacao and Petare, the coffee plantations, and the course of the Rio Guayra, a slender streak of water reflecting a silvery light. The narrow band of cultivated ground was pleasingly contrasted with the wild and gloomy aspect of the neighbouring mountains. Whilst contemplating these grand scenes, we feel little regret that the solitudes of the New World are not embellished with the monuments of antiquity.

But we could not long avail ourselves of the advantage arising from the position of the Silla, in commanding all the neighbouring summits. While we were examining with our glasses that part of the sea, the horizon of which was clearly defined, and the chain of the mountains of Ocumare, behind which begins the unknown world of the Orinoco and the Amazon, a thick fog from the plains rose to the elevated regions, first filling the bottom of the valley of Caracas. The vapours, illumined from above, presented a uniform tint of a milky white. The valley seemed over-spread with water, and looked like an arm of the sea, of which the adjacent mountains formed the steep shore. In vain we waited for the slave who carried Ramsden's great sextant. Eager to avail myself of the favourable state of the sky, I resolved to take a few solar altitudes with a sextant by Troughton of two inches radius. The disk of the sun was half-concealed by the mist. The difference of longitude between the quarter of the Trinidad and the eastern peak of the Silla appears scarcely to exceed  $0^{\circ} 3' 22''^*$ .

Whilst, seated on the rock, I was determining the dip of the needle, I found my hands covered with a species of hairy bee, a little smaller than the honey-bee of the north of Europe. These insects make their nests in the ground. They seldom fly; and, from the slowness of their movements, I should have supposed they were benumbed by the cold of the mountains. The people, in these regions, call them *angelitos* (little angels), because they very seldom sting. They are no doubt of the genus *Apis*, of the division *melipones*. It has been erroneously affirmed that these

\* The difference of longitude between the Silla and La Guayra, according to Fidalgo, is  $0^{\circ} 6' 40''$ .