

bees, which are peculiar to the New World, are destitute of all offensive weapons. Their sting is indeed comparatively feeble, and they use it seldom; but a person, not fully convinced of the harmlessness of these angelitos, can scarcely divest himself of a sensation of fear. I must confess, that, whilst engaged in my astronomical observations, I was often on the point of letting my instruments fall, when I felt my hands and face covered with these hairy bees. Our guides assured us that they attempt to defend themselves only when irritated by being seized by their legs. I was not tempted to try the experiment on myself.

The dip of the needle at the Silla was one centesimal degree less than in the town of Caracas. In collecting the observations which I made during calm weather and in very favourable circumstances, on the mountains as well as along the coast, it would at first seem, that we discover, in that part of the globe, a certain influence of the heights on the dip of the needle, and the intensity of the magnetical forces; but we must remark, that the dip at Caracas is much greater than could be supposed, from the situation of the town, and that the magnetical phenomena are modified by the proximity of certain rocks, which constitute so many particular centres or little systems of attraction.\*

The temperature of the atmosphere varied on the summit of the Silla from eleven to fourteen degrees, according as the weather was calm or windy. Every one knows how difficult it is to verify, on the summit of a mountain, the temperature, which is to serve for the barometric calculation. The wind was east, which would seem to prove that the trade-winds, extend in this latitude much higher than fifteen hundred toises. Von Buch had observed that, at the peak of Teneriffe, near the northern limit of the trade-winds, there exists generally at the elevation of one thousand nine hundred toises, a contrary current from the

\* I have seen fragments of quartz traversed by parallel bands of magnetic iron, carried into the valley of Caracas by the waters descending from the Galipano and the Cerro de Avila. This banded magnetic iron-ore is found also in the Sierra Nevada of Merida. Between the two peaks of the Silla, angular fragments of cellular quartz are found, covered with red oxide of iron. They do not act on the needle. This oxide is of a cinnabar-red colour.