

quartz.* It may be conceived that the valley of Caracas was once an inland lake, before the Rio Guayra found an issue to the east near Caurimare, at the foot of the hill of Auyamas, and before the ravine of Tipe opened on the west, in the direction of Gatia and Cabo Blanco. But how can we imagine that these waters could ascend as high as the Silla, when the mountains opposite this peak, those of Ocumare, were too low to prevent their overflow into the llanos? The pebbles could not have been brought by torrents from more elevated points, since there is no height that commands the Silla. Must we admit that they have been heaved up, like all the mountains which border the coast.

It was half after four in the afternoon when we finished our observations. Satisfied with the success of our journey, we forgot that there might be danger in descending in the dark, steep declivities covered by a smooth and slippery turf. The mist concealed the valley from us; but we distinguished the double hill of La Puerta, which, like all objects lying almost perpendicularly beneath the eye, appeared extremely near. We relinquished our design of passing the night between the two summits of the Silla, and having again found the path we had cut through the thick wood of heliconia, we soon arrived at the Pejual, the region of odoriferous and resinous plants. The beauty of the befarias, and their branches covered with large purple flowers, again rivetted our attention. When, in these climates, a botanist gathers plants to form his herbal, he becomes difficult in his choice in proportion to the luxuriance of vegetation. He casts away those which have been first cut, because they appear less beautiful than those which were out of reach. Though loaded with plants before quitting the Pejual, we still regretted not having made a more ample harvest. We tarried so long in this spot, that night surprised us as we entered the savannah, at the elevation of upwards of nine hundred toises.

As there is scarcely any twilight in the tropics, we pass suddenly from bright daylight to darkness. The moon was on the horizon; but her disk was veiled from time to time

* Fragments of brown copper-ore were found mixed with these pebbles, at an elevation of 1170 toises.