

science. When a ship is condemned in a foreign port, boxes containing only dried plants or stones, instead of being sent to the scientific men to whom they are addressed, are put aside and forgotten. Some of our geological collections taken in the Pacific were, however, more fortunate. We were indebted for their preservation to the generous activity of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society of London, who, amidst the political agitations of Europe, unceasingly laboured to strengthen the bonds of union between scientific men of all nations.

In our investigations we have considered each phenomenon under different aspects, and classed our remarks according to the relations they bear to each other. To afford an idea of the method we have followed, I will here add a succinct enumeration of the materials with which we were furnished for describing the volcanos of Antisana and Pichincha, as well as that of Jorullo: the latter, during the night of the 20th of September, 1759, rose from the earth one thousand five hundred and seventy-eight French feet above the surrounding plains of Mexico. The position of these singular mountains in longitude and latitude was ascertained by astronomical observations. We took the heights of the different parts by the aid of the barometer, and determined the dip of the needle and the intensity of the magnetic forces. Our collections contain the plants which are spread over the flanks of these volcanos, and specimens of different rocks which, superposed one upon another, constitute their external coat. We are enabled to indicate, by measures sufficiently exact, the height above the level of the ocean, at which we found each group of plants, and each volcanic rock. Our journals furnish us with a series of observations on the humidity, the temperature, the electricity, and the degree of transparency of the air on the brinks of the craters of Pichincha and Jorullo; they also contain topographical plans and geological profiles of these mountains, founded in part on the measure of vertical bases, and on angles of altitude. Each observation has been calculated according to the tables and the methods which are considered most exact in the present state of our knowledge; and in order to judge of the degree of confidence which the results may claim, we have preserved the whole detail of our partial operations.

It would have been possible to blend these different materials in a work devoted wholly to the description of the volcanos of Peru and New Spain. Had I given the physical description of a single province, I could have treated separately everything relating to its geography, mineralogy, and botany; but how could I interrupt the narrative of a journey, a disquisition on the manners of a people, or the great phenomena of nature, by an enumeration of the productions of the country, the description of new species of animals and plants, or the detail of astrono-