

At the height of a few hundred feet above the plain, patches of conglomerate adhered in several places to the solid rock. They resembled in hardness, and in the nature of the cement, the masses which may be seen daily forming on some coasts. I do not doubt these pebbles were in a similar manner aggregated, at a period when the great calcareous formation was depositing beneath the surrounding sea. We may believe that the jagged and battered forms of the hard quartz yet show the effects of the waves of an open ocean.

I was, on the whole, disappointed with this ascent. Even the view was insignificant—a plain like the sea, but without its beautiful color and defined outline. The scene, however, was novel, and a little danger, like salt to meat, gave it a relish. That the danger was very little was certain, for my two companions made a good fire—a thing which is never done when it is suspected that Indians are near. I reached the place of our bivouac by sunset, and drinking much maté, and smoking several *cigaritos*, soon made up my bed for the night. The wind was very strong and cold, but I never slept more comfortably.

September 10th.—In the morning, having fairly scudded before the gale, we arrived by the middle of the day at the Sauce posta. On the road we saw great numbers of deer, and near the mountain a guanaco. The plain, which abuts against the Sierra, is traversed by some curious gullies, of which one was about twenty feet wide, and at least thirty deep; we were obliged in consequence to make a considerable circuit before we could find a pass. We stayed the night at the posta, the conversation, as was generally the case, being about the Indians. The Sierra Ventana was formerly a great place of resort; and three or four years ago there was much fighting there. My guide had been present when many Indians were killed: the women escaped to the top of the ridge, and fought most desperately with great stones; many thus saving themselves.

September 11th.—Proceeded to the third posta in company with the lieutenant who commanded it. The distance