

so clear that the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although no less than twenty-six geographical miles distant, could be distinguished clearly as little black streaks. A ship doubling the point under sail appeared as a bright white speck. Anson expresses much surprise, in his voyage, at the distance at which his vessels were discovered from the coast; but he did not sufficiently allow for the height of the land, and the great transparency of the air.

The setting of the sun was glorious; the valleys being black, while the snowy peaks of the Andes yet retained a ruby tint. When it was dark we made a fire beneath a little arbor of bamboos, fried our charqui (or dried slips of beef), took our maté, and were quite comfortable. There is an inexpressible charm in thus living in the open air. The evening was calm and still; the shrill noise of the mountain bizcacha, and the faint cry of a goatsucker, were occasionally to be heard. Besides these, few birds, or even insects, frequent these dry, parched mountains.

August 17th.—In the morning we climbed up the rough mass of greenstone which crowns the summit. This rock, as frequently happens, was much shattered and broken into huge angular fragments. I observed, however, one remarkable circumstance, namely, that many of the surfaces presented every degree of freshness—some appearing as if broken the day before, while on others lichens had either just become, or had long grown, attached. I so fully believed that this was owing to the frequent earthquakes that I felt inclined to hurry from below each loose pile. As one might very easily be deceived in a fact of this kind, I doubted its accuracy, until ascending Mount Wellington, in Van Diemen's Land, where earthquakes do not occur; and there I saw the summit of the mountain similarly composed and similarly shattered, but all the blocks appeared as if they had been hurled into their present position thousands of years ago.

We spent the day on the summit, and I never enjoyed one more thoroughly. Chile, bounded by the Andes and the Pacific, was seen as in a map. The pleasure from the