

sprinkled with myriads of stars, and Chimborazo was delineated, in all its splendour, on the azure and sparkling vault of the firmament.

"On the morning of the 3d of November, at five o'clock, when day had not yet dawned in the equinoctial regions, we left our camp in charge of our people, and departed on our exploring expedition, carrying with us a coffee pot, two thermometers, a compass, matches, and tobacco. A steep hill, sandy and rough with pebbles, which separated us from the perpetual snow, occasioned us so much fatigue at our outset, that two of the natives who accompanied us became discouraged and turned back.

"When we had surmounted this hill, we descended on some soft sand to the bottom of a valley, which we followed, and from the extremity of which we distinguished very clearly the summit of the mountain, entirely free from snow.

"After walking half an hour on the snow, vegetation suddenly ceased, and we saw no other living thing but two large partridges, and on the rocks a few lichens of the families *Idiothalamus* and *Hymenothalamus*. At this point of our ascent we collected some dry branches of *chuquiragua*, and made a bundle of them, which we tied to our backs. We had still to scale an immense rock of trachyte, from the top of which the summit of Chimbarazo appeared to us so near, that we thought we could reach it in half an hour.

"Our ascent was so rapid, that we were soon obliged, from fatigue, to make frequent stoppages to recover our breath. Thirst also began to be severely felt, and in order to moderate it we almost always kept snow in our mouths. But we felt no symptoms of illness or any morbid affection, such as is spoken of by the majority of travellers who have ascended high mountains.

"After halting a few seconds, without even seating ourselves, we again started not only with renewed ardour, but even a kind of furious determination inspired by so near a view of the summit. It appeared evident to us, by this new instance confirming so many previous ones, that at those heights the atmospheric column is still sufficient to prevent any impediment to respiration, and that the shortness of breath and organic affections which are so generally complained of at considerable elevations, must be ascribed to some other cause.

"Always rapidly ascending, we now began to overlook the peaks of the Cordilleras, and to discover a distance furnished with