

situations, enjoying various kinds of soil; streamlets of water are common at the bottoms of nearly every valley; and the clayey nature of the earth seems adapted to retain moisture. It has been inferred with much probability that the presence of woodland is generally determined<sup>1</sup> by the annual amount of moisture; yet in this province abundant and heavy rain falls during the winter; and the summer, though dry, is not so in any excessive degree.<sup>2</sup> We see nearly the whole of Australia covered by lofty trees, yet that country possesses a far more arid climate. Hence we must look to some other and unknown cause.

Confining our view to South America, we should certainly be tempted to believe that trees flourished only under a very humid climate; for the limit of the forest-land follows, in a most remarkable manner, that of the damp winds. In the southern part of the continent, where the western gales, charged with moisture from the Pacific, prevail, every island on the broken west coast, from lat. 38° to the extreme point of Tierra del Fuego, is densely covered by impenetrable forests. On the eastern side of the Cordillera, over the same extent of latitude, where a blue sky and a fine climate prove that the atmosphere has been deprived of its moisture by passing over the mountains, the arid plains of Patagonia support a most scanty vegetation. In the more northern parts of the continent, within the limits of the constant south-eastern trade wind, the eastern side is ornamented by magnificent forests; while the western coast, from lat. 4° S. to lat. 32° S., may be described as a desert: on this western coast, northward of lat. 4° S., where the trade wind loses its regularity, and heavy torrents of rain fall periodically, the shores of the Pacific, so utterly desert in Peru, assume near Cape Blanco the character of luxuriance so celebrated at Guayaquil and Panama. Hence in the southern and northern

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<sup>1</sup> Maclaren, art. "America," *Encyclop. Britann.*

<sup>2</sup> Azara says, "Je crois que la quantité annuelle des pluies est, dans toutes ces contrées, plus considérable qu'en Espagne."—Vol. i. p. 36.