

period of their existence must have been tropical; but judging from South America, such an inference might be erroneous.

The equable, humid, and windy climate of Tierra del Fuego extends, with only a small increase of heat, for many degrees along the west coast of the continent. The forests, for 600 miles northward of Cape Horn, have a very similar aspect. As a proof of the equable climate, even for 300 or 400 miles still further northward, I may mention that in Chiloe (corresponding in latitude with the northern parts of Spain) the peach seldom produces fruit, while strawberries and apples thrive to perfection. Even the crops of barley and wheat¹ are often brought into the houses to be dried and ripened. At Valdivia (in the same latitude of 40° with Madrid) grapes and figs ripen, but are not common; olives seldom ripen even partially, and oranges not at all. These fruits, in corresponding latitudes in Europe, are well known to succeed to perfection; and even in this continent, at the Rio Negro, under nearly the same parallel with Valdivia, sweet potatoes (*convolvulus*) are cultivated; and grapes, figs, olives, oranges, water and musk melons, produce abundant fruit. Although the humid and equable climate of Chiloe, and of the coast northward and southward of it, is so unfavorable to our fruits, yet the native forests, from lat. 45° to 38°, almost rival in luxuriance those of the glowing intertropical regions. Stately trees of many kinds, with smooth and highly colored barks, are loaded by parasitical monocotyledonous plants; large and elegant ferns are numerous, and arborescent grasses entwine the trees into one entangled mass to the height of thirty or forty feet above the ground. Palm-trees grow in lat. 37°; an arborescent grass, very like a bamboo, in 40°; and another closely allied kind, of great length, but not erect, flourishes even as far south as 45° S.

An equable climate, evidently due to the large area of

¹ Agüeros, *Descrip. Hist. de la Prov. de Chiloé*, 1791, p. 94.