

ference. The height of the common cylindrical, branching kind is from twelve to fifteen feet, and the girth (with spines) of the branches between three and four feet.

A heavy fall of snow on the mountains prevented me, during the last two days, from making some interesting excursions. I attempted to reach a lake which the inhabitants, from some unaccountable reason, believe to be an arm of the sea. During a very dry season, it was proposed to attempt cutting a channel from it for the sake of the water, but the padre, after a consultation, declared it was too dangerous, as all Chile would be inundated, if, as generally supposed, the lake was connected with the Pacific. We ascended to a great height, but becoming involved in the snowdrifts failed in reaching this wonderful lake, and had some difficulty in returning. I thought we should have lost our horses; for there was no means of guessing how deep the drifts were, and the animals, when led, could only move by jumping. The black sky showed that a fresh snowstorm was gathering, and we therefore were not a little glad when we escaped. By the time we reached the base the storm commenced, and it was lucky for us that this did not happen three hours earlier in the day.

August 26th.—We left Jajuel and again crossed the basin of S. Felipe. The day was truly Chilean: glaringly bright, and the atmosphere quite clear. The thick and uniform covering of newly-fallen snow rendered the view of the volcano of Aconcagua and the main chain quite glorious. We were now on the road to Santiago, the capital of Chile. We crossed the Cerro del Talguen, and slept at a little rancho. The host, talking about the state of Chile as compared to other countries, was very humble: "Some see with two eyes and some with one, but for my part I do not think that Chile sees with any."

August 27th.—After crossing many low hills we descended into the small land-locked plain of Guitron. In the basins, such as this one, which are elevated from one thousand to two thousand feet above the sea, two species of