

a family, after having cleared a piece of ground, might be driven away, and the property seized by the government. The Chilean authorities are now performing an act of justice by making retribution to these poor Indians, giving to each man, according to his grade of life, a certain portion of land. The value of uncleared ground is very little. The government gave Mr. Douglas (the present surveyor, who informed me of these circumstances) eight and a half square miles of forest near San Carlos, in lieu of a debt; and this he sold for 350 dollars, or about 70% sterling.

The two succeeding days were fine, and at night we reached the island of Quinchao. This neighborhood is the most cultivated part of the archipelago; for a broad strip of land on the coast of the main island, as well as on many of the smaller adjoining ones, is almost completely cleared. Some of the farmhouses seemed very comfortable. I was curious to ascertain how rich any of these people might be, but Mr. Douglas says that no one can be considered as possessing a regular income. One of the richest landowners might possibly accumulate, in a long industrious life, as much as 1,000% sterling; but should this happen, it would all be stowed away in some secret corner, for it is the custom of almost every family to have a jar or treasure-chest buried in the ground.

November 30th.—Early on Sunday morning we reached Castro, the ancient capital of Chiloe, but now a most forlorn and deserted place. The usual quadrangular arrangement of Spanish towns could be traced, but the streets and plaza were coated with fine green turf, on which sheep were browsing. The church, which stands in the middle, is entirely built of plank, and has a picturesque and venerable appearance. The poverty of the place may be conceived from the fact that, although containing some hundreds of inhabitants, one of our party was unable anywhere to purchase either a pound of sugar or an ordinary knife. No individual possessed either a watch or a clock; and an old man, who was supposed to have a good idea of time, was employed to strike