

of species and great abundance of mosses, lichens, and small ferns, is quite extraordinary.' In Tierra del Fuego trees grow only on the hillsides; every level piece of land being invariably covered by a thick bed of peat; but in Chiloe flat land supports the most luxuriant forests. Here, within the Chonos Archipelago, the nature of the climate more closely approaches that of Tierra del Fuego than that of northern Chiloe; for every patch of level ground is covered by two species of plants (*Astelia pumila* and *Donatia magellanica*), which by their joint decay compose a thick bed of elastic peat.

In Tierra del Fuego, above the region of woodland, the former of these eminently sociable plants is the chief agent in the production of peat. Fresh leaves are always succeeding one to the other round the central tap-root; the lower ones soon decay, and in tracing a root downward in the peat, the leaves, yet holding their place, can be observed passing through every stage of decomposition, till the whole becomes blended in one confused mass. The *Astelia* is assisted by a few other plants—here and there a small creeping *Myrtus* (*M. nummularia*), with a woody stem like our cranberry and with a sweet berry—an *Empetrum* (*E. rubrum*), like our heath—a rush (*Juncus grandiflorus*), are nearly the only ones that grow on the swampy surface. These plants, though possessing a very close general resemblance to the English species of the same genera, are different. In the more level parts of the country, the surface of the peat is broken up into little pools of water, which stand at different heights, and appear as if artificially excavated. Small streams of water, flowing underground, complete the disorganization of the vegetable matter, and consolidate the whole.

The climate of the southern part of America appears par-

¹ By sweeping with my insect-net, I procured from these situations a considerable number of minute insects, of the family of Staphylinidæ, and others allied to *Pselaphus*, and minute Hymenoptera. But the most characteristic family in number, both of individuals and species, throughout the more open parts of Chiloe and Chonos is that of the Telephoridæ.