

ticularly favorable to the production of peat. In the Falkland Islands almost every kind of plant, even the coarse grass which covers the whole surface of the land, becomes converted into this substance: scarcely any situation checks its growth; some of the beds are as much as twelve feet thick, and the lower part becomes so solid when dry that it will hardly burn. Although every plant lends its aid, yet in most parts the *Astelia* is the most efficient. It is rather a singular circumstance, as being so very different from what occurs in Europe, that I nowhere saw moss forming by its decay any portion of the peat in South America. With respect to the northern limit, at which the climate allows of that peculiar kind of slow decomposition which is necessary for its production, I believe that in Chiloe (lat. 41° to 42°), although there is much swampy ground, no well characterized peat occurs: but in the Chonos Islands, three degrees further southward, we have seen that it is abundant. On the eastern coast in La Plata (lat. 35°) I was told by a Spanish resident, who had visited Ireland, that he had often sought for this substance, but had never been able to find any. He showed me, as the nearest approach to it which he had discovered, a black peaty soil, so penetrated with roots as to allow of an extremely slow and imperfect combustion.

The zoology of these broken islets of the Chonos Archipelago is, as might have been expected, very poor. Of quadrupeds two aquatic kinds are common. The *Myopotamus Coypus* (like a beaver, but with a round tail) is well known from its fine fur, which is an object of trade throughout the tributaries of La Plata. It here, however, exclusively frequents salt water; which same circumstance has been mentioned as sometimes occurring with the great rodent, the *Capybara*. A small sea-otter is very numerous; this animal does not feed exclusively on fish, but, like the seals, draws a large supply from a small red crab, which swims in shoals near the surface of the water. Mr. Bynoe saw one in Tierra del Fuego eating a cuttle-fish; and at Low's Harbor, another