

been discovered in many other parts, where it does not appear probable that they were used as mere resting-places, but yet where the land is as utterly unfit for any kind of cultivation as it is near the Tambillos or at the Incas Bridge, or in the Portillo pass, at all which places I saw ruins. In the ravine of Jajuel, near Aconcagua, where there is no pass, I heard of remains of houses situated at a great height, where it is extremely cold and sterile. At first I imagined that these buildings had been places of refuge, built by the Indians on the first arrival of the Spaniards; but I have since been inclined to speculate on the probability of a small change of climate.

In this northern part of Chile, within the Cordillera, old Indian houses are said to be especially numerous: by digging among the ruins, bits of woollen articles, instruments of precious metals, and heads of Indian corn, are not infrequently discovered: an arrow-head made of agate, and of precisely the same form with those now used in Tierra del Fuego, was given me. I am aware that the Peruvian Indians now frequently inhabit most lofty and bleak situations; but at Copiapó I was assured, by men who had spent their lives in travelling through the Andes, that there were very many (*muchisimas*) buildings at heights so great as almost to border on the perpetual snow, and in parts where there exist no passes, and where the land produces absolutely nothing, and, what is still more extraordinary, where there is no water. Nevertheless it is the opinion of the people of the country (although they are much puzzled by the circumstance) that, from the appearance of the houses, the Indians must have used them as places of residence. In this valley, at Punta Gorda, the remains consisted of seven or eight square little rooms, which were of a similar form with those at Tambillos, but built chiefly of mud, which the present inhabitants cannot, either here or, according to Ulloa, in Peru, imitate in durability. They were situated in the most conspicuous and defenceless position, at the bottom of the flat broad valley. There was no water nearer