

The valley was pretty well sheltered from the cold wind; but there was very little brushwood for fuel. The Gauchos, however, soon found what, to my great surprise, made nearly as hot a fire as coals; this was the skeleton of a bullock lately killed, from which the flesh had been picked by the carrion-hawks. They told me that in winter they often killed a beast, cleaned the flesh from the bones with their knives, and then with these same bones roasted the meat for their suppers.

18th.—It rained during nearly the whole day. At night we managed, however, with our saddle-cloths to keep ourselves pretty well dry and warm; but the ground on which we slept was on each occasion nearly in the state of a bog, and there was not a dry spot to sit down on after our day's ride. I have in another part stated how singular it is that there should be absolutely no trees on these islands, although *Tierra del Fuego* is covered by one large forest. The largest bush in the island (belonging to the family of *Compositæ*) is scarcely so tall as our gorse. The best fuel is afforded by a green little bush about the size of common heath, which has the useful property of burning while fresh and green. It was very surprising to see the Gauchos, in the midst of rain and everything soaking wet, with nothing more than a tinder box and piece of rag, immediately make a fire. They sought beneath the tufts of grass and bushes for a few dry twigs, and these they rubbed into fibres; then surrounding them with coarser twigs, something like a bird's nest, they put the rag with its spark of fire in the middle and covered it up. The nest being then held up to the wind, by degrees it smoked more and more, and at last burst out in flames. I do not think any other method would have had a chance of succeeding with such damp materials.

19th.—Each morning, from not having ridden for some time previously, I was very stiff. I was surprised to hear the Gauchos, who have from infancy almost lived on horse-back, say that, under similar circumstances, they always suffer. St. Jago told me that, having been confined for