CHAPTER XI

Strait of Magellan—Port Famine—Ascent of Mount Tarn—Forests—Edible Fungus—Zoology—Great Sea-weed—Leave Tierra del Fuego—Climate—Fruit-trees and Productions of the Southern Coasts—Height of Snow-line on the Cordillera—Descent of Glaciers to the Sea—Icebergs formed—Transportal of Bowlders—Climate and Productions of the Antarctic Islands—Preservation of frozen Carcasses—Recapitulation

STRAIT OF MAGELLAN—CLIMATE OF THE SOUTHERN COASTS

IN the end of May, 1834, we entered for the second time the eastern mouth of the Strait of Magellan. The country on both sides of this part of the strait consists of nearly level plains, like those of Patagonia. Cape Negro, a little within the second Narrows, may be considered as the point where the land begins to assume the marked features of Tierra del Fuego. On the east coast, south of the strait, broken park-like scenery in a like manner connects these two countries, which are opposed to each other in almost every feature. It is truly surprising to find in a space of twenty miles such a change in the landscape. If we take a rather greater distance, as between Port Famine and Gregory Bay, that is about sixty miles, the difference is still more wonderful. At the former place, we have rounded mountains concealed by impervious forests, which are drenched with the rain, brought by an endless succession of gales; while at Cape Gregory, there is a clear and bright blue sky over the dry and sterile plains. The atmospheric currents,[1] although

[1] The southwesterly breezes are generally very dry. January 29th, being at anchor under Cape Gregory: a very hard gale from W. by S., clear sky with few cumuli; temperature 57°, dew-point 36°—difference 21°. On January 15th, at Port St. Julian: in the morning light winds with much rain, followed by a very heavy squall with rain—settled into heavy gale with large cumuli—cleared up, blowing very strong from S.S.W. Temperature 60°, dew-point 42°—difference 18°.

geology.19thcenturyscience.org/books/1845-Darwin-JournalRes/README