

beheld it, can imagine so entangled a mass of dying and dead trunks. I am sure that often, for more than ten minutes together, our feet never touched the ground, and we were frequently ten or fifteen feet above it, so that the seamen as a joke called out the soundings. At other times we crept one after another on our hands and knees, under the rotten trunks. In the lower part of the mountain, noble trees of the Winter's Bark, and a laurel like the sassafras with fragrant leaves, and others, the names of which I do not know, were matted together by a trailing bamboo or cane. Here we were more like fishes struggling in a net than any other animal. On the higher parts, brushwood takes the place of larger trees, with here and there a red cedar or an alerce pine. I was also pleased to see, at an elevation of a little less than 1,000 feet, our old friend the southern beech. They were, however, poor stunted trees; and I should think that this must be nearly their northern limit. We ultimately gave up the attempt in despair.

December 10th.—The yawl and whale-boat, with Mr. Sullivan, proceeded on their survey, but I remained on board the "Beagle," which the next day left San Pedro for the southward. On the 13th we ran into an opening in the southern part of Guayatecas, or the Chonos Archipelago; and it was fortunate we did so, for on the following day a storm, worthy of Tierra del Fuego, raged with great fury. White massive clouds were piled up against a dark blue sky, and across them black ragged sheets of vapor were rapidly driven. The successive mountain ranges appeared like dim shadows; and the setting sun cast on the woodland a yellow gleam, much like that produced by the flame of spirits of wine. The water was white with the flying spray, and the wind lulled and roared again through the rigging: it was an ominous, sublime scene. During a few minutes there was a bright rainbow, and it was curious to observe the effect of the spray, which, being carried along the surface of the water, changed the ordinary semicircle into a circle—a band of prismatic colors being continued, from both feet of the