

islands will, in all probability, in a short time become peopled like those adjoining the coast of Chiloe.

The wild potato grows on these islands in great abundance, on the sandy, shelly soil near the sea-beach. The tallest plant was four feet in height. The tubers were generally small, but I found one, of an oval shape, two inches in diameter: they resembled in every respect, and had the same smell as English potatoes; but when boiled they shrunk much, and were watery and insipid, without any bitter taste. They are undoubtedly here indigenous: they grow as far south, according to Mr. Low, as lat. 50°, and are called Aquinas by the wild Indians of that part: the Chilotan Indians have a different name for them. Professor Henslow, who has examined the dried specimens which I brought home, says that they are the same with those described by Mr. Sabine¹ from Valparaiso, but that they form a variety which by some botanists has been considered as specifically distinct. It is remarkable that the same plant should be found on the sterile mountains of central Chile, where a drop of rain does not fall for more than six months, and within the damp forests of these southern islands.

In the central parts of the Chonos Archipelago (lat. 45°), the forest has very much the same character with that along the whole west coast, for 600 miles southward to Cape Horn. The arborescent grass of Chiloe is not found here; while the beech of Tierra del Fuego grows to a good size, and forms a considerable proportion of the wood; not, however, in the same exclusive manner as it does further southward. Cryptogamic plants here find a most congenial climate. In the Strait of Magellan, as I have before remarked, the country appears too cold and wet to allow of their arriving at perfection; but in these islands, within the forest, the number

¹ Horticultural Transact., vol. v. p. 249. Mr. Caldeleugh sent home two tubers, which, being well manured, even the first season produced numerous potatoes and an abundance of leaves. See Humboldt's interesting discussion on this plant, which it appears was unknown in Mexico, in Polit. Essay on New Spain, book iv. chap. ix.