

be augmented by their presence, especially between  $28^{\circ}$  and  $30^{\circ}$  of north latitude, which indicates an origin of some sort of animal nature.

On the 27th, we slowly approached the island of Orchila. Like all the small islands in the vicinity of the fertile coast of the continent, it has never been inhabited. I found the latitude of the northern cape,  $11^{\circ} 51' 44''$  and the longitude of the eastern cape,  $68^{\circ} 26' 5''$  (supposing Nueva Barcelona to be  $67^{\circ} 4' 48''$ ). Opposite the western cape there is a small rock against which the waves beat turbulently. Some angles taken with the sextant, gave, for the length of the island from east to west, 8.4 miles (950 toises); and for the breadth scarcely three miles. The island of Orchila, which, from its name, I figured to myself as a bare rock covered with lichens, was at that period beautifully verdant. The hills of gneiss were covered with grasses. It appears that the geological constitution of Orchila resembles, on a small scale, that of Marguerita. It consists of two groups of rocks joined by a neck of land; it is an isthmus covered with sand, which seems to have issued from the floods by the successive lowering of the level of the sea. The rocks, like all those which are perpendicular and insulated in the middle of the sea, appear much more elevated than they really are, for they scarcely exceed from 80 to 90 toises. The *Punta rasa* stretches to the north-west, and is lost, like a sandbank, below the waters. It is dangerous for navigators, and so is likewise the Mogote, which, at the distance of two miles from the western cape, is surrounded by breakers. On a very near examination of these rocks, we saw the strata of gneiss inclined towards the north-west, and crossed by thick layers of quartz. The destruction of these layers has doubtless created the sands of the surrounding beach. Some clumps of trees shade the valleys, the summits of the hills are crowned with fan-leaved palm-trees; probably the *palma de sombrero* of the Llanos (*Corypha tectorum*). Rain is not abundant in these countries; but probably some springs might be found on the island of Orchila, if sought for with the same care as in the mica-slate rocks of Punta Araya. When we recollect how many bare and rocky islands are inhabited and cultivated between the 17th and 26th degrees of latitude in the