

CHAPTER XXI.

CHILE. MAGELLAN'S STRAITS. FALKLAND ISLANDS. ASCENSION.

Valparaiso. The Andes not Conspicuous. Cattle lassoed in the Streets. Excursion up the Uspallata Pass. Leafless Mistletoe on the Leafless Cactus. An Equestrian Hair-Cutter. Dead and disabled Animals on the Pass. Use of the Lasso in Robbery and Flirtation. Cleverness of a Horse on a Mountain Path. Fjords of the Western Coast of Patagonia. Density of the Forest. An Anchor Broken. Fuegians. Wild Geese at Elizabeth Island. Kitchen Middens. The Falkland Islands. Visit to Port Darwin. Scotchmen turned Gauchos. Chapinas and Tropijes. Wild Horses and their Habits. Various Modes of Handling Cattle in Different Parts of the World. Goose-Bolas made of Knuckle-Bones. Flies and Gnats with Rudimentary Wings. Skeleton of Ziphioid Whale. Fuegian Arrow-heads Scattered in the Islands. Habits of Jackass Penguin. Ascension Island. Land Crabs. The Hatching of Turtles' Eggs. Shooting at Flying Fish. Birds at Boatswain Bird Island.

Valparaiso, Chile. November 19th to December 11th, 1875.—How Valparaiso came to be called the Vale of Paradise I cannot well understand ; the voyagers who so named it must have come from a desert land indeed. The surrounding country has a most barren and inhospitable appearance, the red decomposed granite soil showing bare everywhere, and being only here and there sprinkled over with scanty bushes. Not a tree is to be seen anywhere from the anchorage in the harbour, though a wide view is thence obtained of the coast of the Bay.

I had expected the far-famed Andes to show out as a splendid range in the background ; but these mountains, though they look close to the coast on the map, lie so far inland that one has to search for them in the view from the Bay in order to see them at all. Even then they are only to be discerned on a clear day, and when seen they look small and not at all imposing. The residents on the hill-slopes know where the higher peaks lie, and point them out to strangers ; but there is nothing in their appearance which would lead one to suspect their real grandeur were one not acquainted with it beforehand.