

to examine some reported coal beds. The route lay over the dreary moorland, and wound and turned about in order to avoid the treacherous bogs. A "pass" in the Falkland Islands means not a practicable cleft in the mountains but a track by which it is possible to ride across a bog. The horses born and bred in the island know full well when they are approaching dangerous ground, and tremble all over when forced to step on it. A most interesting plant, the Bog Balsam (*Bolax glebaria*), occurs all over the moors, closely simulating in appearance the *Azorella selago* described in Chapter IX. as covering the surface of the ground in Kerguelen Island with elastic cushions. The *Bolax* forms closely similar springy compact rounded lumps of dark green on the Falkland soil (see Pl. XXXV.).

At every 10 miles or so a shepherd's cottage was met with, otherwise the entire route was uninhabited. Usually the shepherd was a Scotchman in the employ of the Falkland Company; some of the shepherds are married, and seem well off and were very hospitable. These Scotchmen have almost entirely supplanted the "gauchos" from the mainland, who did all the cattle work at the time of Darwin's visit to the islands; they come out from home usually entirely unaccustomed to riding, but very soon become most expert with the lasso and bolas, and can ride and break in the wildest horses. There were only two Spanish gauchos in the employ of the Company at the time of the ship's visit. The Company's shepherds are allowed each eight horses, a fresh one for every day of the week and a pack horse, which feed together on the moorland near the shepherd's cottage, and keep together in a band though quite free. An old broken down mare which cannot roam far is usually kept with each band, and is generally one in which the hoofs, as occurs quite commonly in the Falklands from the softness of the soil, are grown out and turned up somewhat like rams' horns. Though the gauchos themselves are matters of the past in the Falklands, their Spanish terms for all things connected with cattle and horses survive and are in full use among the Scotch shepherds. Such a maimed animal as above described is accordingly called a "chapina" (*chapina*, a woman's clog); the band of horses, which is called a "tropija," never deserts its chapina.

A man after riding 30 or 40 miles and about to change horses merely takes the saddle off his horse, gives the animal's back a rub with his fingers, to set the hair free where the saddle cloth pressed, and lets the horse go, when it never fails to return to its tropija and feeding ground. Horses were changed several times on the route, since the party were the guests of the Company, and were treated most hospitably; the tired horses were always simply turned loose, to find their own way back for 20 miles or so.

The progress on the trip was mostly slow, because of the boggy ground, and it was dark by the time the party reached the end of the 60 miles' ride.

An experienced guide is required in order to traverse the Falkland Island wastes and find the passes. To a stranger every hill and mountain appears alike, and many persons have lost their way and their lives on the moors. The most experienced "camp" men (Spanish, *campo*) lose themselves sometimes, especially when a thick fog comes