

From the Critic.

A BRAZILIAN FOREST.

*Journal of a Voyage round the World.* By CHARLES DARWIN, M.A., F.R.S. London, 1845. Demy 8vo. John Murray.

THE author of this very entertaining and instructive book, accompanied, in the capacity of *naturalist*, the expedition which, in her majesty's ship *Beagle*, sailed round the world in 1832 and following years. The duty entrusted to Captain Fitzroy—the commander of the ship, and his officers, was to complete the survey of Patagonia and Terra del Fuego, to lay down correctly the shores of Chili, Peru, and certain islands in the Pacific, and to carry a chain of chronometrical measurements round the world. This undertaking, so important to the interests of physical science, had been commenced in 1826, under Captain King, and was completed by this expedition in so satisfactory a manner as to leave little more to be desired.

It adds not a little to the lustre which invests our country, that she stands foremost among existing nations in the prosecution of maritime discovery and the investigation of the physical phenomena which appertain broadly to the globe.

The achievements of this nature made a few centuries ago by the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch, and later still by the French, stand honorable examples in their history, which their present spirit no longer emulates—or at best but feebly. Next to the British, it is to the Americans and Russians that science is most indebted for discoveries in this way. Their expeditions have been conducted with energy, curiosity, and ability, and judiciously supported with a liberal hand; the result of which has been a considerable, and therefore invaluable, addition to our knowledge of geography, natural history, and the physical laws—magnetic, tidal, and other, which, affecting navigation, control to a greater or less extent the interchange of commodities, of arts and refinement, between the multitudinous inhabitants of the globe. On the utility of such national undertakings, as it must be obvious to the dullest intellect, it were needless to enlarge.

The discoveries made by the officers of the *Beagle* in the sciences they undertook to watch, have appeared in separate publications; those made by Mr. Darwin, with his notes and remarks, have been edited by British naturalists severally most conversant with the departments intrusted to their care, and, thanks to the munificence of the lords of the treasury, who gave a thousand pounds towards the expenses, laid before the public in several volumes. From these, and his journal, Mr. Darwin has compiled this agreeable book, condensing, and adding occasionally to parts, so as to fit the work for the popular taste; but referring naturalists, for full details, to the large publications which comprise the results of the expedition.

To follow the author throughout his course is impracticable here; we must therefore content ourselves with stating that this volume (there are others to follow) comprises the narrative of his voyage along the shores and his excursions into the interior of South America. His narrative is lively and graphic, his observations acute and marked with judgment, and his style unaffected and easy. We proceed to give a few extracts, which, by their spirit and general character, will convey a fair notion of the work. There is the coloring of nature in our author's description of his first entrance upon

“The day has passed delightfully. Delight itself, however, is a weak term to express the feelings of a naturalist who, for the first time, has wandered by himself in a Brazilian forest. The elegance of the grasses, the novelty of the parasitical plants, the beauty of the flowers, the glossy green of the foliage, but above all the general luxuriance of the vegetation, filled me with admiration. A most paradoxical mixture of sound and silence pervades the shady parts of the wood. The noise from the insects is so loud, that it may be heard even in a vessel anchored several hundred yards from the shore; yet within the recesses of the forest a universal silence appears to reign. To a person fond of natural history, such a day as this brings with it a deeper pleasure than he can ever hope to experience again. After wandering about for some hours, I returned to the landing-place; but before reaching it I was overtaken by a tropical storm. I tried to find shelter under a tree, which was so thick that it would never have been penetrated by common English rain; but here, in a couple of minutes, a little torrent flowed down the trunk. It is to this violence of the rain that we must attribute the verdure at the bottom of the thickest woods: if the showers were like those of a colder clime, the greater part would be absorbed or evaporated before it reached the ground.”

In an excursion from Rio Janeiro, Mr. Darwin passed a spot which had been the place of refuge of some runaway slaves, his account of which we extract:—

“Our party amounted to seven. The first stage was very interesting. The day was powerfully hot, and as we passed through the woods, everything was motionless, excepting the large and brilliant butterflies, which lazily fluttered about. The view seen when crossing the hills behind Praia Grande was most beautiful; the colors were intense, and the prevailing tint a dark blue; the sky and the calm waters of the bay vied with each other in splendor. After passing through some cultivated country, we entered a forest, which in the grandeur of all its parts could not be exceeded. We arrived by midday at Ithacaia; this small village is situated on a plain, and round the central house are the huts of the negroes. These, from their regular form and position, reminded me of the drawings of the Hottentot habitations in Southern Africa. As the moon rose early, we determined to start the same evening for our sleeping-place at the Lagoa Marica. As it was growing dark we passed under one of the massive, bare, and steep hills of granite which are so common in this country. This spot is notorious from having been, for a long time, the residence of some runaway slaves, who, by cultivating a little ground near the top, contrived to eke out a subsistence. At length they were discovered, and a party of soldiers being sent, the whole were seized with the exception of one old woman, who, sooner than again be led into slavery, dashed herself to pieces from the summit of the mountain. In a Roman matron this would have been called the noble love of freedom: in a poor negress it is mere brutal obstinacy. We continued riding for some hours. For the few last miles the road was intricate, and it passed through a desert waste of marshes and lagoons. The scene by the dimmed light of the moon was most desolate. A few fire-flies flitted by us; and

the solitary snipe, as it rose, uttered its plaintive cry. The distant and sullen roar of the sea scarcely broke the stillness of the night."

Contrasted against the comfort, civility, and convenience enjoyed at an English hotel, a curious description is the following of the accommodation at

#### A BRAZILIAN INN.

"As the *vênda* here was a very good one, and I have the pleasant, but rare remembrance, of an excellent dinner, I will be grateful and presently describe it, as the type of its class. These houses are often large, and are built of thick upright posts, with boughs interwoven, and afterwards plastered. They seldom have floors, and never glazed windows; but are generally pretty well roofed. Universally the front part is open, forming a kind of verandah, in which tables and benches are placed. The bed-rooms join on each side, and here the passenger may sleep as comfortably as he can, on a wooden platform, covered by a thin straw mat. The *vênda* stands in a court yard, where the horses are fed. On first arriving, it was our custom to unsaddle the horses and give them their Indian corn; then, with a low bow, to ask the *senhôr* to do us the favor to give us something to eat. 'Anything you choose, sir,' was his usual answer. For the few first times, vainly I thanked Providence for having guided us to so good a man. The conversation proceeding, the case universally became deplorable. 'Any fish, can you do us the favor of giving?' 'Oh! no, sir.' 'Any soup?' 'No, sir.' 'Any bread?' 'Oh! no, sir.' 'Any dried meat?' 'Oh! no, sir.' If we were lucky, by waiting a couple of hours, we obtained fowls, rice, and *farinha*. It not unfrequently happened that we were obliged to kill, with stones, the poultry for our own supper. When, thoroughly exhausted by fatigue and hunger, we timorously hinted that we should be glad of our meal, the pompous, and (though true) most unsatisfactory answer was, 'It will be ready when it is ready.' If we had dared to remonstrate any further, we should have been told to proceed on our journey, as being too impertinent. The hosts are most ungracious and disagreeable in their manners; their houses and their persons are often filthily dirty; the want of the accommodation of forks, knives, and spoons is common; and I am sure no cottage or hovel in England could be found in a state so utterly destitute of every comfort. In *Campos Novos*, however, we fared sumptuously; having rice and fowls, biscuit, wine, and spirits, for dinner; coffee in the evening, and fish with coffee for breakfast. All this, with good food for the horses, only cost 2s. 6d. per head. Yet the host of this *vênda*, being asked if he knew anything of a whip which one of the party had lost, gruffly answered, 'How should I know! why did you not take care of it!—I suppose the dogs have eaten it.'"

On his way to *Buenos Ayres*, our author stopped at the *Sauce Posta*, where he witnessed

#### A TRIAL OF SKILL WITH THE BOLAS.

"I staid at this *posta* two days, waiting for a troop of soldiers, which General *Rosas* had the kindness to send to inform me would shortly travel to *Buenos Ayres*; and he advised me to take the opportunity of the escort. In the morning we rode to some neighboring hills to view the country, and to examine the geology. After dinner the soldiers divided themselves into two parties for a trial of skill with the *bolas*. Two spears were stuck in

the ground thirty-five yards apart, but they were struck and entangled only once in four or five times. The balls can be thrown fifty or sixty yards, but with little certainty. This, however, does not apply to a man on horseback: for when the speed of the horse is added to the force of the arm, it is said, that they can be whirled with effect to the distance of eighty yards. As a proof of their force, I may mention, that at the *Falkland Islands*, when the Spaniards murdered some of their own countrymen, and all the Englishmen, a young friendly Spaniard was running away, when a great tall man, by name *Luciano*, came at full gallop after him, shouting to him to stop, and saying that he only wanted to speak to him. Just as the Spaniard was on the point of reaching the boat, *Luciano* threw the balls: they struck him on the legs with such a jerk, as to throw him down and render him for some time insensible. The man, after *Luciano* had had his talk, was allowed to escape. He told us that his legs were marked by great weals, where the thong had wound round, as if he had been flogged with a whip. In the middle of the day two men arrived, who brought a parcel from the next *posta* to be forwarded to the general: so that besides these two, our party consisted this evening of my guide and self, the lieutenant, and his four soldiers. The latter were strange beings: the first a fine young negro; the second half Indian and negro; and the two others nondescripts, namely, an old Chilian miner, the color of mahogany, and another partly a mulatto; but two such mongrels, with such detestable expressions, I never saw before. At night, when they were sitting round the fire, and playing at cards, I retired to view such a *Salvator Rosa* scene. They were seated under a low cliff, so that I could look down upon them; around the party were lying dogs, arms, and remnants of deer and ostriches; and their long spears were stuck in the turf. Further, in the dark background, their horses were tied up, ready for any sudden danger. If the stillness of the desolate plain was broken by one of the dogs barking, a soldier leaving the fire would place his head close to the ground, and thus slowly scan the horizon. Even if the noisy *teru-teru* uttered its scream, there would be a pause in the conversation, and every head, for the moment, a little inclined.

"What a life of misery these men appear to us to lead! They were at least ten leagues from the *Sauce posta*, and since the murder committed by the Indians, twenty from another. The Indians are supposed to have made their attack in the middle of the night, for very early in the morning after the murder, they were luckily seen approaching this *posta*. The whole party here, however, escaped, together with the troop of horses; each one taking a line for himself, and driving with him as many animals as he was able to manage."

#### BUENOS AYRES.

"The city of *Buenos Ayres* is large;\* and I should think one of the most regular in the world. Every street is at right angles to the one it crosses, and the parallel ones being equidistant, the houses are collected into solid squares of equal dimensions, which are called *quadras*. On the other hand, the houses themselves are hollow squares; all the rooms opening into a neat little court-yard.

\* It is said to contain 60,000 inhabitants. *Monte Video*, the second town of importance on the banks of the *Plata*, has 15,000.

They are generally only one story high, with flat roofs, which are fitted with seats, and are much frequented by the inhabitants in summer. In the centre of the town is the Plaza, where the public offices, fortress, cathedral, &c., stand. Here also, the old viceroys, before the revolution, had their palaces. The general assemblage of buildings possesses considerable architectural beauty, although none individually can boast of any.

"The great *corral*, where the animals are kept for slaughter to supply food to this beef-eating population, is one of the spectacles best worth seeing. The strength of the horse as compared to that of the bullock is quite astonishing: a man on horseback having thrown his lazo round the horns of a beast, can drag it anywhere he chooses. The animal ploughing up the ground with outstretched legs, in vain efforts to resist the force, generally dashes at full speed to one side; but the horse immediately turning to receive the shock, stands so firmly that the bullock is almost thrown down, and it is surprising that their necks are not broken. The struggle is not, however, one of fair strength; the horse's girth being matched against the bullock's extended neck. In a similar manner a man can hold the wildest horse, if caught with the lazo just behind the ears. When the bullock has been dragged to the spot where it is to be slaughtered, the *matador* with great caution cuts the hamstrings. Then is given the death bellow; a noise more expressive of fierce agony than any I know: I have often distinguished it from a long distance, and have always known that the struggle was then drawing to a close. The whole sight is horrible and revolting: the ground is almost made of bones; and the horses and riders are drenched with gore."

With this we must conclude our notice of one of the most agreeable and instructive books of travels that have lately been published.

The second part of this instructive and entertaining book has just been published; and surpasses the first in the interest it contains for the reader. It carries forward the narrative of the movements of the expedition from its entrance on Patagonia, thence to the Falkland Islands, Tierra del Fuego, and Chile, embracing excursions to the foot of the Andes, and across the Cordilleras to Valparaiso.

It may well be supposed that these countries would yield a rich harvest to an observer so close and painstaking as Mr. Darwin, and so they have. As if to favor his purpose of investigation, there occurred, whilst he was in Valdivia, one of the most terrible earthquakes that had been known in South America (which is so greatly plagued with them) for many years. He has thus described the effects of this severe visitation.

"While the ship was beating up to the anchorage, I landed on the island of Quiriquina. The mayor-domo of the estate quickly rode down to tell me the terrible news of the great earthquake of the 20th:—'That not a house in Concepcion or Talcahuano (the port) was standing: that seventy villages were destroyed; and that a great wave had almost washed away the ruins of Talcahuano.' Of this latter statement I soon saw abundant proofs—the whole coast being strewed over with timber and furniture as if a thousand ships had been wrecked. Besides chairs, tables, book-shelves, &c., in great numbers, there were several roofs

of cottages, which had been transported almost whole. The storehouses at Talcahuano had been burst open, and great bags of cotton, yerba, and other valuable merchandise were scattered on the shore. During my walk round the island, I observed that numerous fragments of rock, which, from the marine productions adhering to them, must recently have been lying in deep water, had been cast up on the high beach; one of these was six feet long, three broad, and two thick.

"The island itself as plainly showed the overwhelming power of the earthquake, as the beach did that of the consequent great wave. The ground in many parts was fissured in north and south lines, perhaps caused by the yielding of the parallel and steep sides of this narrow island. Some of the fissures near the cliffs were a yard wide. Many enormous masses had already fallen on the beach; and the inhabitants thought that when the rains commenced far greater slips would happen. The effect of the vibration on the hard primary slate, which composes the foundation of the island, was still more curious; the superficial parts of some narrow ridges were as completely shivered as if they had been blasted by gunpowder. This effect, which was rendered conspicuous by the fresh factures and displaced soil, must be confined to near the surface, for otherwise there would not exist a block of solid rock throughout Chile; nor is this improbable, as it is known that the surface of a vibrating body is affected differently from the central part. It is, perhaps, owing to this same reason, that earthquakes do not cause quite such terrific havoc within deep mines as would be expected. I believe this convulsion has been more effectual in lessening the size of the island of Quiriquina, than the ordinary wear-and-tear of the sea and weather during the course of a whole century.

"The next day I landed at Talcahuano, and afterwards rode to Concepcion. Both towns presented the most awful yet interesting spectacle I ever beheld. To a person who had formerly known them, it possibly might have still been more impressive; for the ruins were so mingled together, and the whole scene possessed so little the air of a habitable place, that it was scarcely possible to imagine its former condition. The earthquake commenced at half-past eleven o'clock in the forenoon. If it had happened in the middle of the night, the greater number of the inhabitants (which in this one province amount to many thousands) must have perished, instead of less than a hundred; as it was, the invariable practice of running out of doors at the first trembling of the ground, alone saved them. In Concepcion, each house, or row of houses, stood by itself, a heap or line of ruins; but in Talcahuano, owing to the great wave, little more than one layer of bricks, tiles, and timber, with here and there part of a wall, left standing, could be distinguished. From this circumstance, Concepcion, although not so completely desolated, was a more terrible, and, if I may so call it, picturesque sight. The first shock was very sudden. The mayor-domo at Quiriquina told me, that the first notice he received of it, was finding both the horse he rode and himself rolling together on the ground. Rising up, he was again thrown down. He also told me that some cows which were standing on the steep side of the island were rolled into the sea. The great wave caused the destruction of many cattle; on one low island, near the head of

the bay, seventy animals were washed off and drowned. It is generally thought that this has been the worst earthquake ever recorded in Chile; but as the very severe ones occur only after long intervals, this cannot easily be known; nor indeed would a much worse shock have made any great difference, for the ruin was now complete. Innumerable small tremblings followed the great earthquake, and within the first twelve days no less than three hundred were counted.

"The most remarkable effect of this great earthquake was the permanent uprising of the land no less than three feet. The island of Juan Fernandez—memorable as the solitary residence for years of Alexander Selkirk, a shipwrecked sailor—was so violently affected, though distant from Concepcion 360 miles to the north-east, that the trees smote against each other, and there burst forth a volcano under water close to the shore. In the Cordilleras, also, two volcanoes opened at the same moment into violent action, which probably relieved the earth of the upheaving forces that disturbed her. According to our author, the space from beneath which volcanic matter was erupted is in one line 720 miles, and in another, at right angles to the first, 400 miles in extent; from this, Mr. Darwin infers that there is here stretched out a subterranean lake of lava of nearly double the area of the Black Sea.

The author's picture of that inhospitable and imperfectly known region, Tierra del Fuego, its products and wild inhabitants, is interesting in a high degree. It is a mountainous land, partly submerged in the sea, so that deep inlets and bays occupy the place where valleys should exist. Trees reach up the mountain-sides, to an elevation of 1,200 feet, and the line of perpetual snow descends as low as 3,000 feet. There is no level ground, and the surface is everywhere covered with a thick bed of swampy peat.

"There is (says the author) a degree of mysterious grandeur in mountain behind mountain, with the deep intervening valleys, all covered by one thick, dusky mass of forest. The atmosphere, likewise, in this climate, where gale succeeds gale, with rain, hail and sleet; seems blacker than anywhere else. In the Strait of Magellan, looking due southward from Port Famine, the distant channels between the mountains appeared from their gloominess to lead beyond the confines of this world.

The Fuegians, according to our author, are very little superior in the scale of intelligence to the higher class of brutes. Inhabiting an inclement climate, their ingenuity, unlike that of the stunted natives of the arctic circle, does not even extend to the simple arts of preserving warmth, by sheltering themselves effectually from the weather. They are cannibals, appear to have no idea of a future life, though they show traces of superstition in a dread of superior invisible powers, each tribe having a conjuring doctor, though his duties, Mr. Darwin could never clearly ascertain. The remarks, however, which he made on these barbarians will come with greater authority from his own pen, therefore we extract the subjoined description of

#### THE FUEGIANS.

"While going one day on shore near Wollaston Island, we pulled alongside a canoe with six Fuegians. These were the most abject and mis-

erable creatures I anywhere beheld. On the east coast, the natives, as we have seen, have guanaco cloaks, and on the west they possess seal-skins. Amongst these central tribes the men generally have an otter-skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket-handkerchief, which is barely sufficient to cover their backs as low down as their loins. It is laced across the breast by strings, and according as the wind blows, it is shifted from side to side. But these Fuegians in the canoe were quite naked, and even one full grown woman was absolutely so. It was raining heavily, and the fresh water, together with the spray, trickled down her body. In another harbor not far distant, a woman, who was suckling a recently-born child, came one day alongside the vessel, and remained there out of mere curiosity, whilst the sleet fell and thawed on her naked bosom, and on the skin of her naked baby! These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skins filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, and their gestures violent. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world. It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the lower animals can enjoy; how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians! At night, five or six human beings, naked, and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals. Whenever it is low water, winter or summer, night or day, they must rise to pick shell-fish from the rocks; and the women either dive to collect sea-eggs, or sit patiently in their canoes, and with a baited hair-line, without any hook, jerk out little fish. If a seal is killed, or the floating carcass of a putrid whale discovered, it is a feast; and such miserable food is assisted by a few tasteless berries and fungi.

"They often suffer from famine; I heard Mr. Low, a sealing-master, intimately acquainted with the natives of this country, give a curious account of the state of a party of one hundred and fifty natives on the west coast, who were very thin and in great distress. A succession of gales prevented the women from getting shell-fish on the rocks, and they could not go out in their canoes to catch seal. A small party of these men one morning set out, and the other Indians explained to him, that they were going a four days' journey for food: on their return, Low went to meet them, and he found them excessively tired, each man carrying a great square piece of putrid whale's-blubber with a hole in the middle, through which they put their heads, as the Gauchos do through their ponchos or cloaks. As soon as the blubber was brought into a wigwam, an old man cut off thin slices, and muttering over them, broiled them for a minute, and distributed them to the famished party, who during this time preserved a profound silence. Mr. Low believes that whenever a whale is cast on shore, the natives bury large pieces of it in the sand as a resource in time of famine; and a native boy, whom he had on board, once found a stock thus buried. The different tribes when at war are cannibals. From the concurrent, but quite independent evidence of the boy taken by Mr. Low, and of Jemmy Button, it is certainly true that when pressed in winter by hunger, they kill and devour their old women before they kill

their dogs: the boy, being asked by Mr. Low why they did this, answered, 'Doggies catch otters, old women no.' This boy described the manner in which they were killed by being held over smoke and thus choked; he imitated their screams as a joke, and described the parts of their bodies which are considered best to eat. Horrid as such a death by the hands of their friends and relatives must be, the fears of the old women, which hunger begins to press, are more painful to think of; we are told that they often run away into the mountains, but that they are pursued by the men and brought back to the slaughter-house at their own fire-sides.

"The different tribes have no government or chief; yet each is surrounded by other hostile tribes, speaking different dialects, and separated from each other only by a deserted border or neutral territory; the cause of their warfare appears to be the means of subsistence. Their country is a broken mass of wild rocks, lofty hills, and useless forests; and these are viewed through mists and endless storms. The habitable land is reduced to the stones on the beach. In search of food they are compelled unceasingly to wander from spot to spot, and so steep is the coast, that they can only move about in their wretched canoes. They cannot know the feeling of having a home, and still less that of domestic affection; for the husband is to the wife a brutal master to a laborious slave. Was a more horrid deed ever perpetrated than that witnessed on the west coast by Byron, who saw a wretched mother pick up her bleeding, dying infant-boy, whom her husband had mercilessly dashed on the stones for dropping a basket of sea-eggs. How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play; what is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgment to decide upon? to knock a limpet from the rock does not require even cunning, that lowest power of the mind. Their skill in some respects may be compared to the instinct of animals; for it is not improved by experience; the canoe, their most ingenious work, poor as it is, has remained the same, as we know from Drake, for the last two hundred and fifty years."

Notwithstanding the low estimate Mr. Darwin formed of these savages, and which the foregoing account of them, by showing the stunted, abject condition both of their bodies and minds, fully justifies, he is inclined to place them in the scale of intelligence above the Australians. Taking his description of the Fuegians as it stands, we see sufficient reason for dissent from his opinion. The Australians, when discovered, it should be remembered, had a number of domestic implements, built comfortable huts, though inhabiting a superior climate to that of the Fuegians; had their weapons of offence and defence, their spears, their clubs, their throwing-sticks, and one at least quite new and peculiar to themselves, the boomerang; and, lastly, they had a kind of rude government, and some curious ceremonies at the period of manhood and on the occasions of marriage and sepulture. Nor can we agree with him in opinion that if the *Australian* be superior to the Fuegian in acquirements, it does not follow that he is his superior in mental capacity; for surely the one implies the other as clearly as the greater contains the less. In proportion as the powers of the mind are cultivated and extended must the arts of civilized life progress; therefore, if the acquirements of the

*Australian* be superior to those of the Fuegian, his mental capacity must be superior also.

Quitting, not unwillingly, the shores of Tierra del Fuego, the *Beagle* reached Valparaiso late at night on the 13th July. We extract Mr. Darwin's description of the chief sea-port of Chile:—

#### VALPARAISO.

"When morning came, everything appeared delightful. After Tierra del Fuego, the climate felt quite delicious—the atmosphere so dry, and the heavens so clear and blue, with the sun shining brightly, that all nature seemed sparkling with life. The view from the anchorage is very pretty. The town is built at the very foot of a range of hills about 1,600 feet high, and rather steep. From its position, it consists of one long, straggling street, which runs parallel to the beach, and wherever a ravine comes down, the houses are piled up on each side of it. The rounded hills being only partially protected by a very scanty vegetation, are worn into numberless little gullies, which expose a singularly bright red soil. From this cause, and from the low whitewashed houses with tile roofs, the view reminded me of St. Cruz in Teneriffe. In a northeasterly direction there are some fine glimpses of the Andes; but these mountains appear much grander when viewed from the neighboring-hills: the great distance at which they are situated can then more readily be perceived. The volcano of Aconcagua is particularly magnificent. This huge and irregularly conical mass has an elevation greater than that of Chimborazo; for, from measurements made by the officers in the *Beagle*, its height is no less than 23,000 feet. The Cordilleras, however, viewed from this point, owe a great part of their beauty to the atmosphere through which they are seen. When the sun was setting in the Pacific, it was admirable to watch how clearly their rugged outlines could be distinguished, yet how varied and how delicate were the shades of their color.

"The immediate neighborhood of Valparaiso is not very productive to the naturalist. During the long summer the wind blows steadily from the southward, and a little off shore, so that rain never falls; during the three winter months, however, it is sufficiently abundant. The vegetation in consequence is very scanty; except in some deep valleys, there are no trees, and only a little grass and a few low bushes are scattered over the less steep part of the hills. When we reflect, that at the distance of 350 miles to the south, this side of the Andes is completely hidden by one impenetrable forest, the contrast is very remarkable. I took several long walks while collecting objects of natural history. The country is pleasant for exercise. There are many very beautiful flowers, and, as in most other dry climates, the plants and shrubs possess strong and peculiar odors—even one's clothes by brushing through them became scented. I did not cease from wonder at finding each succeeding day as fine as the foregoing. What a difference does climate make in the enjoyment of life! How opposite are the sensations when viewing black mountains half-enveloped in clouds, and seeing another range through the light blue haze of a fine day! The one for a time may be very sublime; the other is all gaiety and happy life."

There is the coloring of nature in the following picturesque description of a troop of mules, and the prospect from the ridge of Peuquenás, one of the Cordilleras:—

"When about halfway up we met a large party with seventy loaded mules. It was interesting to hear the wild cries of the muleteers, and to watch the long descending string of the animals; they appeared so diminutive, there being nothing but the bleak mountains with which they could be compared. When near the summit, the wind, as generally happens, was impetuous and extremely cold. On each side of the ridge we had to pass over broad bands of perpetual snow, which were now soon to be covered by a fresh layer. When we reached the crest and looked backwards, a glorious view was presented. The atmosphere resplendently clear; the sky an intense blue; the profound valleys; the wild broken forms; the heap of ruins, piled up during the lapse of ages; the bright-colored rocks, contrasted with the quiet mountains of snow; all these together produced a scene no one could have imagined. Neither plant nor bird, excepting a few condors wheeling around the higher pinnacles, distracted my attention from the inanimate mass. I felt glad that I was alone: it was like watching a thunderstorm, or hearing in full orchestra a chorus of the Messiah."

At the island of Lemuy the ship's crew found the natives hospitable, and willing to sell provisions at prices that will amuse Europeans.

"The people here live chiefly on shell-fish and potatoes. At certain seasons they catch also, in 'corrales,' or hedges under water, many fish which are left on the mud-banks as the tide falls. They occasionally possess fowls, sheep, goats, pigs, horses and cattle, the order in which they are here mentioned, expressing their respective numbers. I never saw anything more obliging and humble than the manners of these people. They generally began with stating, that they were poor natives of the place, and not Spaniards, and that they were in sad want of tobacco and other comforts. At Ceylon, the most southern island, the sailors bought, with a stick of tobacco, of the value of three half-pence, two fowls, one of which, the Indian stated, had skin between its toes, and turned out to be a fine duck; and with some cotton handkerchiefs, worth three shillings, three sheep and a large bunch of onions were procured. The yawl at this place was anchored some way from the shore, and we had fears for her safety from robbers during the night. Our pilot, Mr. Douglas, accordingly told the constable of the district that we always placed sentinels with loaded arms, and, not understanding Spanish, if we saw any person in the dark, we should assuredly shoot him. The constable, with much humility, agreed to the perfect propriety of this arrangement, and promised us that no one should stir out of his house during that night."

A curious sight to an European must have been one which Mr. Darwin witnessed in the Pamoass in the shape of

#### A FLIGHT OF LOCUSTS.

"After our two days' tedious journey, it was refreshing to see in the distance the rows of poplar and willows growing round the village and river of Luxan. Shortly before we arrived at this place, we observed to the south a ragged cloud of a dark reddish-brown color. At first we thought it was smoke from some great fire on the plains; but we soon found that it was a swarm of locusts. They were flying northward; and with the aid of a light breeze, they overtook us at the rate of ten or fifteen

miles an hour. The main body filled the air from a height of twenty feet, to that, as it appeared, of two or three thousand above the ground; "and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle:" or rather, I should say, like a strong breeze passing through the rigging of a ship. The sky, seen through the advanced guard, appeared like a mezzotinto engraving, but the main body was impervious to sight; they were not, however, so thick together, but that they could escape a stick waved backwards and forwards. When they alighted, they were more numerous than the leaves in the field, and the surface became reddish instead of being green: the swarm having once alighted, the individuals flew from side to side in all directions. Locusts are not an uncommon pest in this country: already during this season, several smaller swarms had come up from the south, where, as apparently in all other parts of the world, they are bred in the deserts. The poor cottagers in vain attempted by lighting fires, by shouts, and by waving branches, to avert the attack. This species of locust closely resembles, and perhaps is identical with the famous *gryllus migratorious* of the East."

We have already transgressed the limits we can conveniently spare to this book; its interesting nature, and the information with which every page is rife, have led us on despite ourselves. We conclude by recommending Mr. Darwin's journal to the perusal of all the readers of *The Critic*.

#### PRAYER OF A DESPONDING HEART.

BY MRS. C. M. SAWYER.

LORD, grant me stronger faith! My soul is turning  
With weary pinion from the world away,  
And in its depths there broods a deathless yearning  
For clearer glimpses of the Land of Day!  
'Tis dark around! Faith's starry beacons flee me,  
Or, veil'd in storms, no longer guidance give—  
'Tis dark within!—O, God, I cannot see Thee  
Show me Thy face once more that I may live

Give me more light! 'tis fearful thus to wander  
Amid the graves of lost and buried hopes;  
Fearful thus lone and in the dark to ponder  
Where all-dismayed my spirit blindly gropes.  
O, for that ray, so steady and unclouded,  
Which on my childhood's clearer vision smiled!  
Where is it now? In darkness I am shrouded—  
O, Father, pity me, Thine erring child!

Have pity, Father! lest the ray of reason  
Which Thou hast kindled in my bosom fail,  
And my unconscious lips should murmur treason,  
Or boldly dare Thy judgments to assail!  
Have pity! aid me! See me lowly kneeling,  
And hear the pleadings of my stricken heart;  
Through all its chambers pour Thy precious  
healing—  
Give me but light, and let the gloom depart!

Thou hearest, Father! Lo! like doves descending,  
Peace softly enters in my bleeding breast;  
Faith by my side, above her anchor bending,  
Smiles on my soul and sweetly murmurs "Rest!"  
Darkness my spirit is no longer shrouding;  
Once more the radiance of Thy face I see!  
O for a tongue to breathe the rapture crowding,  
The thanks uprising, Father, now to Thee!

Rose of Sharon.