

Journal of a Voyage round the World. (Murray's Home and Colonial Library, Nos. xxiij and xxliij.)

H. M. S. Beagle, commanded by Capt. Fitzroy, sailed in the end of 1831 on a Voyage of discovery, to complete the survey of Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego, to survey the shores of Chili, Peru, and of some islands in the Pacific, and to carry a chain of chromometrical measurements round the World. Mr. Darwin accompanied the expedition as Naturalist, and the results of his labours were deemed so valuable, that Government granted £1,000 towards the expenses of publication. The work before us is a personal narrative, chiefly occupied with subjects connected with Natural History, but abounding also with notices of the inhabitants of the various lands, both civilized and savage, visited by the Beagle.

White's History of Selborne has been the model of all books which treat of personal observations on Natural History in a popular and desultory manner; but the peculiar moral charm which invests that book, the peace and quiet of a country parsonage, is exchanged in Darwin's for the excitement of adventure. Very little notice is taken of the proceedings of the vessel herself, or of those nautical and scientific objects which should be recorded by her voyage. While the Beagle was anchored at the different ports, during the prosecution of the survey in the neighbourhood, Mr. Darwin was penetrating into the interior, traversing the plains, climbing the mountains, living among the people, constantly enriching his journal with notes of the country, its inhabitants, and productions. He collected, therefore, abundant materials for a highly interesting narrative, and the Public are greatly indebted to him, as well as to his spirited publisher, for giving in a popular form that which has already obtained for him the approbation of Government, and the praise of the learned.

After touching at the Cape de Verd islands, the Beagle proceeded to Brazil. At the former place the atmosphere was generally hazy from impalpable dust which fell in such quantity as slightly to injure the astronomical instruments. Mr. D. notices the fact that such dust is sometimes known to fall upon vessels some hundreds of miles from the land. We have once witnessed this phenomenon. The ship's sails one night were literally stained brown with the quantities of dust which fell upon them. Strong winds had been blowing steadily from one quarter for many days, and the nearest land to windward was 2000 miles distant. From Brazil the Beagle sailed to the river Plate. Mr. Darwin gives very full and interesting accounts of the habits of the people, and of the existing and extinct animals of the country. The contrast between these latter is extraordinary. Of the existing aboriginal animals of South America, excluding the horse, and cow, which have been imported, the largest are the apiri, which may average 600 lbs. and after them, the Manas, less than 300 lbs. But on a single small plain the fossil remains of nine great quadrupeds were found, some of which, the Megatherium and Toxodon, were as large as the elephant, while others were little inferior in size; yet strange to say, the characters of some of these monsters were such as we now find only in the smallest classes of living animals. The Toxodon, as large as an elephant, is connected by its teeth with the Guawers, an order of which weavers, rats, and squirrels are the principal living genera. Another of these great creatures had a shelly coat like the armadillo. The contrast between the fossils and the present animals of South America is not greater than between these latter and the animals of South Africa. The ten largest herbivorous animals of South Africa, whose general character is that of arid deserts, have an average weight of 6000 lbs. South America, on the contrary, which is covered to a great extent with the most luxuriant forests, has no animal larger than a full sized hog, and the ten largest herbivora must include a monkey.

Very full and animated accounts were given of the inhabitants of the vast plain between Buenos Ayres and the Andes, as well as of the Ostrich, Condor, Puma, Jaguar, and a multitude of other animals. These, as well as notices of Patagonia and the Falkland islands, we must omit. The Beagle took out three natives of Tierra del Fuego, two of whom had been brought away by Capt. Fitzroy on a former voyage, and a third had been bought for a pearl button. They were now restored to their friends, a miserable exchange for the poor creatures. The country seems to be the most inhospitable on the face of the earth, mountainous, cold, wet, stormy, and utterly barren. The inhabitants have scarcely clothes or dwellings, but sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals, naked, and scarcely sheltered from the wind and rain. Their food is derived almost wholly from the sea; they have no Government, chiefs, or religion; their different tribes wage wars on each other, and hunger makes them cannibals.

From the concurrent but quite independent evidence of the boy taken by Mr. Low, and of Jenny 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 others, old women no." This boy described the manner in which they are 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 relations must be, the fears of the old women, whose hunger begins to press, are more painful to think of. We are told that they then often run away into the mountains, but that they are pursued by the men, and brought back to the slaughter-house at their own firesides.

The beasts, birds, and insects of Tierra del Fuego are very few, and of reptiles there are none. The sea is the great storehouse of food, and a single giant seaweed, forming vast submarine forests, and found from the extreme southern inlet of Cape Horn, to California, if not Kamtschatka, and over at least 140 degrees of longitude, seems of supreme importance. It is at once a buoy, a breakwater, and an inexhaustible storehouse of food for a multitude of animals. Mr. Darwin's account of it is long, but of sufficient interest to be given entire:—

"In all parts of the world a rocky and partially protected shore supports, in a given space, a greater number of individual animals than any other station. There is one marine production which from its importance is worthy of a particular history. It is the Kelp, or Macrocystis pyrifera. This plant grows on every rock from low-water mark to a great depth, both on the outer coast, and within the channels. I believe, during the voyages of the Adventure and Beagle, not one rock near the surface was discovered which was not buoyed by this floating weed. The good service it thus affords to vessels navigating near this stormy land is evident; and it certainly has saved many a one from being wrecked, and flourishing amidst those great breakers of the western ocean, which no mass of rock, let it be ever so hard, can long resist. The stem is round, slimy and smooth, and seldom has a diameter so much as an inch. A few taken together are sufficiently strong to support the weight of the large loose stones, to which in the inland channels they grow attached; and yet some of these stones were so heavy, that when drawn to the surface they could scarcely be lifted into the boat by one person. Capt. Cook, in his second voyage, says, that this plant at Kerguelan Land rises from a greater depth than twenty-four fathoms; and as it does not grow at a perpendicular direction, but makes a very acute angle with the bottom, and much of it afterwards spreads many fathoms on the surface of the sea, I am well warranted to say that some of it grows to the length of sixty fathoms and upwards." I do not suppose the stem of any other plant attains so great a length as 500 feet, as stated by Capt. Cook. Capt. Fitzroy, moreover, found it growing up from the greater depth of 45 fathoms. The beds of this seaweed, even when not of great breadth, make excellent natural floating breakwaters. It is quite curious to see, in an exposed harbour, how soon the waves from the open sea, as they travel through the straggling stems, sink in height, and pass into smooth water.

"The number of living creatures of all orders whose existence intimately depends on the kelp is wonderful. A great volume might be written, describing the inhabitants of one of these beds of seaweed. Almost all the leaves, excepting those that float on the surface, are so thickly increased with corallines as to be of a white color. We find extraordinary delicate structures, some inhabited by simple hydrula-like polypi, others by more organized kinds, and beautiful compound Ascidie. On the leaves, also, various petioliform shells, Trochi, uncovered molluscs, and some sponges are attached. Innumerable crustacea frequent every part of the plant. On shaking the great entangled roots, a pile of small fish, shells, cuttle-fish, crabs of all orders, sea-seeps, starfish, beautiful Holothuricæ, Planarie, and crawling voracious animals of a multitude of forms, all fall out together. Often as I returned to a branch of the kelp, I never failed to discover animals of new and curious structures. In Chile, where the kelp does not thrive very well, the numerous shells, corallines, and crustacea are absent; but there yet remain a few of the Pustacina, and some compound Ascidie; the latter however are of a different species from those in Tierra del Fuego; we here see the focus possessing a wider range than the animals which use it as a shade. I can only compare these great aquatic forests of the southern hemisphere with the terrestrial ones in the intertropical regions. Let it in any country a forest was destroyed, I do not believe nearly so many species of animals would perish as would here from the destruction of the kelp. Amidst the leaves of this plant numerous species of fish live which nowhere else could find food or shelter; with their destruction, the many corallines and other fishing birds, the otters, seals and porpoises would perish also; and lastly the Paganian savage, the miserable lord of this miserable land, would retort his cannibal feast, decrease in numbers, and perhaps cease to exist."

Proceeding along the West Coast of South America, the author was at Valdivia at the great earthquake of Feb. 20th 1835, the ravages and phenomena of which he well describes. Two volcanoes in front of Chile burst forth under water close to Juan Fernandez, which was violently shaken. On the 19th of the previous month, three of the great volcanoes of the Andes had an eruption, the distance between the southernmost of the three, Osorno, and the northernmost, Coscogina, being 3,180 miles. The latter eruption was very considerable, and was accompanied with an earthquake felt over 1000 miles. The author explored many parts of this mighty range of mountains, traversing the passes and visiting the mines. Sleeping at an elevation of 12,000 feet, an attempt to boil potatoes for supper was of course unsuccessful, for at that elevation water boils when hardly scalding hot. "The pot was left on the fire all night, and next morning it was boiled again, but yet the potatoes were not cooked." His companion came to the simple conclusion "that the earred pot, which was a new one, did not choose to boil potatoes."

In Chili he visited the mines of Jajuel, where he stayed five days. His host, the superintendent of the mine, was a married, but rather ignorant and dishonest man. He had struck a Spanish woman and did not mean to return home, but his admiration for the mines of Cornwall remained unbounded. Among many other questions he asked, "Now that George Rex is dead, how many more of the family of Rexes are yet alive?"

"These mines are of Copper, and there is all shipped to Swansea to be smelted. Hence the mines have an aspect singularly quiet, as compared with those in England: here no smoke, fer-

noce, or great steam-engines, disturb the solitude of the surrounding mountains.

"The Chilian Government, or rather the old Spanish law, encourages by every method the searching for mines. The discoverer may work a mine on any ground, by paying five shillings; and before paying this he may try, even in the garden of another man, for twenty days.

"It is now well known that the Chilian method of mining is the cheapest. My host says that the two principal improvements introduced by foreigners have been, first, producing by previous roasting the Copper pyrites, which being the common ore in Cornwall, the English miners were astounded on their arrival to find thrown away as useless: secondly, stamping and washing the scraps from the old furnaces, by which process particles of metal &c. recovered in abundance. I have actually seen mules carrying to the coast for transportation to England a cargo of such cinders. But the first case is much the most curious. The Chilian miners were so convinced that copper pyrites contained not a particle of copper, that they laughed at the Englishmen for their ignorance, who laughed in turn, and bought their richest veins for a few dollars. It is very odd that in a country where mining had been extensively carried on for many years, so simple a process as gently roasting the ore to expel the sulphur previous to smelting it, had never been discovered. A few improvements have likewise been introduced in some of the simple machinery; but even to the present day, water is removed from some mines by men carrying it up the shaft in leathern bags."

We could easily multiply interesting extracts, did space allow; but we have quoted enough to show that this is a book to live; a valuable addition to a very valuable series.

To the Editor of the Cornwall Royal Gazette.

Sir, Treliske, September 4th, 1845. In a leading article of your journal of last week, I observed the following Paragraph:—

"When the Poor Law was enacted, it was proposed to connect with it a revision of the Law of Settlement, with a view to spare the poor the sufferings of needless removal, and to relieve parishes from the evils of litigation. The difficulties were then found too great, and the evil remained untouched. A measure was announced for the Session just ended, to the consideration of which the whole previous recess was devoted, and when it was brought forward, to the amazement and indignation of the Country, it appeared that the foundation of it was to destroy parochial settlements altogether, and transfer it to the Union! The poor man's home, upon which his claim should rest for sympathy and relief, was no longer to be marked by the endearing tie of his parish Clergyman and parish Church, but by the revolting associations of the relieving officer and the Union workhouse, &c. &c."

Had the above statements appeared in the columns of that depraved journal, The Times, they would have created me neither surprise nor concern. Believing however your views to be erroneous, and under the impression that the question of Settlement will again at no distant time occupy the attention of the Legislature, and consequently of the Provincial Press, I am induced to submit for your perusal, the following letter written by me so long ago as March last, on this particular subject; but which was not then published, in consequence of the sudden resolution announced by Sir James Graham to withdraw the measure. Should you on perusal condescend to afford it a place in your journal, you are quite at liberty to do so, but I fear that my engagements will not afford me an opportunity of transcribing it previously to the publication of your journal for the present week.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, EDWARD ARCHER.

To the Guardians of the Launceston Union.

GENTLEMEN, Treliske, March 31st, 1845. Having been prevented through indisposition, from attending in my place at the Board of Guardians, on Saturday last, I learn with surprise and regret, that the discussion on Sir James Graham's recently introduced Bill, for Consolidating and Amending the laws relating to Parochial Settlement, and to the Removal of the Poor, elicited such a sweeping and unequivocal expression of general condemnation, that you almost unanimously came to the resolution of preferring on the ensuing Board day, a petition against the whole Bill, whilst those two or three Members of the Board, among whom was the Vice Chairman, (the Chairman having, I rejoice to find, declined his concurrence in either step), who dissented from this wholesale measure, dissented only to the extent, that the proposed condemnatory resolutions, should especially be confined to those two clauses, from the operation of which in my humble opinion, the interests of the poor, no less than the Ratepayer, would be most beneficially affected.

I allude to the 2nd and 9th Clauses, containing the proposed alterations as to Settlement, and the constitution of Unions for Settlement. Permit me, feeling as I do considerable interest in the success of the measure, to offer you a few plain remarks on the subject, not so much with a hope that I shall thereby succeed in influencing even one favorable vote, as to record my own earnest protest against the contemplated opposition to a measure, which would, I feel convinced, prove the greatest boon to the labouring, no less than the wealthier classes of society.

I shall confine my observations to the latter clause of the two, inasmuch as its adoption or rejection appears to me to involve the fate of the former, and in doing so, will first take into consideration the Justice of the objections urged against it. The most important are these, viz., "That it is a breaking up of the parochial system, and will tend consequently to sever that mutual bond of parochial sympathy, and identity of interest, which now exists between the ratepayer and the poor. That the former will cease to entertain that social feeling he has hitherto done towards his needy brother parishioner, while the latter will be oppressed with a feeling of desolation and destitution, from the knowledge that he will not have, as heretofore, his parish on which to fall back in the hour of need. It is also contended that every undesirable labourer, inasmuch as no one will be immediately and directly interested in his maintenance, will be straightway discharged and turned adrift upon the world, the necessary consequence of which must be that the Union-houses will be dinged with able bodied inhabitants.

Let us weigh these objections correctly and impartially. First, as regards the ratepayer. Now there is scarcely a parish, which does not support some paupers legally settled in it, but permitted to reside at a distance, perhaps of 50 or 100 miles, from the place of their legal settlement, and consequently supported out of the pockets of those to whom they are even personally unknown. It is absurd to suppose that in these instances there exists any feeling of attachment or mutual interest on the part of the Rate-payer towards such individuals because of their legal settlement in such parish; but if there does not in these cases, equally with all others, then clearly parochial interest and parochial settlement are neither identical nor synonymous. Let me ask those Ministers of parishes who are members of our Board, whether, in the zealous discharge of their duties, they draw any distinction between those members of their flock who have or have not a Legal Settlement in their parish; either as regards attention to their wants, or interest in their welfare? Or rather whether, so long as each individual resides this or that side of a hedge or a stream, which marks the boundaries of their respective parishes, they do not consider all equally entitled to their pastoral care? In short, whether or not some needy parishioner, whom circumstances have rendered an object of especial attachment, may not have "belonged" (as it is termed) to a far distant parish?

And now with reference to the poor man, whom it is said this bill will rob of the only remaining link which bound him to his wealthier brethren—Where, it is asked, shall he look in the day of distress for consolation and assistance, when deprived of the parental aid which it has hitherto been his consolation to anticipate would be then extended to him by "his parish?" Before answering this question, let me ask another, and rather an important one, viz., What is actually his present condition when in distress, as regards parochial relief, and what course does he now pursue? Surely this: he applies to the Relieving Officer, who, having to the best of his ability informed himself of the circumstances of the case, reports the application on the ensuing Board day to the whole assembly of Guardians. By these jointly as a Board, the merits of the case are enquired into; by them jointly, relief, as well as the nature and amount of that relief, is awarded or refused. The applicant's "parish," except through its guardians as its representatives, has no voice in the matter; indeed any attempt at dictation on the part of the parish to the Board of Guardians, would have a tendency to prejudice the pauper's case rather than otherwise.

Before the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, this objection might have had some weight; but then, as Sir James Graham observes, Parochial Administration ceased, and Union administration began. The proposed measure, therefore, is not new in principle, but merely an extension of the detail.

Having disposed of the objections to the clause, let us proceed to enquire what beneficial results may be anticipated for the laborer from its adoption. (I mean the honest, industrious, well-disposed laborer.) Suppose him to be residing in a parish in which his legal settlement is not incontestably clear, and in which, from scarcity of work, hands are of necessity thrown out of employment. In nine cases out of ten, will he not, though ever so good, ever so striving or industrious a workman, be one of the first to suffer being warned "that he must apply for work in his own (presumed) parish." Thither, therefore, he repairs, and meets with the retort "That he is not acknowledged." What is the consequence? The poor fellow is compelled to pauperise himself (and numerous instances of this kind do occur); he must actually, being an able bodied man, go into the Union House in order to have his settlement legally investigated before the magistrates. Now from this lamentable and cruel hardship, the Bill of Sir James Graham would in a great measure relieve him.

I have always contended too that in point of wages the Agricultural Laborer is the worst used "Mechanic" of all that numerous class whose lot it is to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow—a misfortune for which he is entirely indebted to the "Parochial System." I mean that there is no gradation in the amount of wages according to merit, in his own parish; and he is denied the privilege extended to all other artisans of seeking to increase his earnings, because out of the precincts of that parish he dare not stir, but at the risk of being discharged when work is scarce, and the "legally settled laborers" have to be employed." Whatever therefore be the standard of wages in his particular parish, whether nine, eight,

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