

Excerpts from Charles Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*

Adapted with permission from www.literature.org

Preface

I have stated in the preface to the first Edition of this work, and in the Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle, that it was in consequence of a wish expressed by Captain Fitz Roy, of having some scientific person on board, accompanied by an offer from him of giving up part of his own accommodations, that I volunteered my services, which received, through the kindness of the hydrographer, Captain Beaufort, the sanction of the Lords of the Admiralty. As I feel that the opportunities which I enjoyed of studying the Natural History of the different countries we visited, have been wholly due to Captain Fitz Roy, I hope I may here be permitted to repeat my expression of gratitude to him; and to add that, during the five years we were together, I received from him the most cordial friendship and steady assistance. Both to Captain Fitz Roy and to all the Officers of the Beagle.¹ I shall ever feel most thankful for the undeviating kindness with which I was treated during our long voyage....

Devonport, England: 50°N, 4°W

December, 27, 1831

After having been twice driven back by heavy southwestern gales, Her Majesty's ship Beagle, a ten-gun brig, under the command of Captain Fitz Roy, R.N., sailed from Devonport on the 27th of December, 1831. The object of the expedition was to complete the survey of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, commenced under Captain King in 1826 to 1830 -- to survey the shores of Chile, Peru, and of some islands in the Pacific -- and to carry a chain of chronometrical measurements round the World. On the 6th of January we reached Teneriffe, but were prevented landing, by fears of our bringing the cholera: the next morning we saw the sun rise behind the rugged outline of the Grand Canary island, and suddenly illuminate the Peak of Teneriffe, whilst the lower parts were veiled in fleecy clouds. This was the first of many delightful days never to be forgotten. On the 16th of January, 1832, we anchored at Porto Praya, in St. Jago, the chief island of the Cape de Verd archipelago.

Cape Verde, Porto Praya 14°N, 23°W

January 16, 1832

The neighbourhood of Porto Praya, viewed from the sea, wears a desolate aspect. The volcanic fires of a past age, and the scorching heat of a tropical sun, have in most places rendered the soil unfit for vegetation. The country rises in successive steps of table-land, interspersed with some truncate conical hills, and the horizon is bounded by an irregular chain of more lofty mountains. The scene, as beheld through the hazy atmosphere of this climate, is one of great interest; if, indeed, a person, fresh from sea, and who has just walked, for the first time, in a grove of cocoa-nut trees, can be a judge of anything but his own happiness. The island would generally be considered as very uninteresting; but to anyone accustomed only to an English landscape, the novel aspect of an utterly sterile land possesses a grandeur which more vegeta-

tion might spoil. A single green leaf can scarcely be discovered over wide tracts of the lava plains; yet flocks of goats, together with a few cows, contrive to exist. It rains very seldom, but during a short portion of the year heavy torrents fall, and immediately afterwards a light vegetation springs out of every crevice....

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 23°S, 43°W

July 5th, 1832. -- In the morning we got under way, and stood out of the splendid harbour of Rio de Janeiro. In our passage to the Plata, we saw nothing particular, excepting on one day a great shoal of porpoises, many hundreds in number. The whole sea was in places furrowed by them; and a most extraordinary spectacle was presented, as hundreds, proceeding together by jumps, in which their whole bodies were exposed, thus cut the water. When the ship was running nine knots an hour, these animals could cross and recross the bows with the greatest ease, and then dash away right ahead. As soon as we entered the estuary of the Plata, the weather was very unsettled. One dark night we were surrounded by numerous seals and penguins, which made such strange noises, that the officer on watch reported he could hear the cattle bellowing on shore. On a second night we witnessed a splendid scene of natural fireworks; the mast-head and yard-arm-ends shone with St. Elmo's light; and the form of the vane could almost be traced, as if it had been rubbed with phosphorus. The sea was so highly luminous, that the tracks of the penguins were marked by a fiery wake, and the darkness of the sky was momentarily illuminated by the most vivid lightning.

Maldonado, Uruguay: 34°S, 54°W

July 24th, 1833. -- The Beagle sailed from Maldonado, and on August the 3rd she arrived off the mouth of the Rio Negro. This is the principal river on the whole line of coast between the Strait of Magellan and the Plata. It enters the sea about three hundred miles south of the estuary of the Plata. About fifty years ago, under the old Spanish government, a small colony was established here; and it is still the most southern position (lat. 41°) on this eastern coast of America, inhabited by civilized man.

Buenos Aires, Argentina: 34°S, 59°W

August 24, 1833

The Beagle arrived here on the 24th of August, and a week afterwards sailed for the Plata. With Captain Fitz Roy's consent I was left behind, to travel by land to Buenos Ayres. I will here add some observations, which were made during this visit and on a previous occasion, when the Beagle was employed in surveying the harbour.

The plain, at the distance of a few miles from the coast, belongs to the great Pampean formation, which consists in part of a reddish clay, and in part of a highly calcareous marly rock. Nearer the coast there are some plains formed from the wreck of the upper plain, and from mud, gravel, and sand thrown up by the sea during the slow elevation of the land, of which elevation we have evidence in upraised beds of recent shells, and in rounded pebbles of pumice scattered over the country. At Punta Alta we have a section of one of these later-formed little plains, which is highly interesting from the number and extraordinary character of the remains

of gigantic land-animals embedded in it. These have been fully described by Professor Owen, in the Zoology of the voyage of the Beagle, and are deposited in the College of Surgeons. I will here give only a brief outline of their nature.

First, parts of three heads and other bones of the Megatherium, the huge dimensions of which are expressed by its name. Secondly, the Megalonyx, a great allied animal. Thirdly, the Scelidotherium, also an allied animal, of which I obtained a nearly perfect skeleton. It must have been as large as a rhinoceros: in the structure of its head it comes, according to Mr. Owen, nearest to the Cape Anteater, but in some other respects it approaches to the armadilloes. Fourthly, the Mylodon Darwinii, a closely related genus of little inferior size. Fifthly, another gigantic edental quadruped. Sixthly, a large animal, with an osseous coat in compartments, very like that of an armadillo. Seventhly, an extinct kind of horse, to which I shall have again to refer. Eighthly, a tooth of a Pachydermatous animal, probably the same with the Macrauchenia, a huge beast with a long neck like a camel, which I shall also refer to again. Lastly, the Toxodon, perhaps one of the strangest animals ever discovered: in size it equalled an elephant or megatherium, but the structure of its teeth, as Mr. Owen states, proves indisputably that it was intimately related to the Gnawers, the order which, at the present day, includes most of the smallest quadrupeds: in many details it is allied to the Pachydermata: judging from the position of its eyes, ears, and nostrils, it was probably aquatic, like the Dugong and Manatee, to which it is also allied. How wonderfully are the different Orders, at the present time so well separated, blended together in different points of the structure of the Toxodon!

The remains of these nine great quadrupeds, and many detached bones, were found embedded on the beach, within the space of about 200 yards square. It is a remarkable circumstance that so many different species should be found together; and it proves how numerous in kind the ancient inhabitants of this country must have been. At the distance of about thirty miles from Punta Alta, in a cliff of red earth, I found several fragments of bones, some of large size. Among them were the teeth of a gnawer, equalling in size and closely resembling those of the Capybara, whose habits have been described; and therefore, probably, an aquatic animal. There was also part of the head of a Ctenomys; the species being different from the Tucutuco, but with a close general resemblance. The red earth, like that of the Pampas, in which these remains were embedded, contains, according to Professor Ehrenberg, eight fresh-water and one salt-water infusorial animalcule; therefore, probably, it was an estuary deposit.

The remains at Punta Alta were embedded in stratified gravel and reddish mud, just such as the sea might now wash up on a shallow bank. They were associated with twenty-three species of shells, of which thirteen are recent and four others very closely related to recent forms.² From the bones of the Scelidotherium, including even the knee-cap, being intombed in their proper relative positions, and from the osseous armour of the great armadillo-like animal being so well preserved, together with the bones of one of its legs, we may feel assured that these remains were fresh and united by their ligaments, when deposited in the gravel together with the shells.³ Hence we have good evidence that the above enumerated gigantic quadrupeds, more different from those of the present day than the oldest of the tertiary quadrupeds of Europe, lived whilst

the sea was peopled with most of its present inhabitants; and we have confirmed that remarkable law so often insisted on by Mr. Lyell, namely, that the "longevity of the species in the mammalia is upon the whole inferior to that of the testacea."⁴

Port St. Julian, Argentina: 49°S, 67°W

January 9, 1834

Everything in this southern continent has been effected on a grand scale: the land, from the Rio Plata to Tierra del Fuego, a distance of 1200 miles, has been raised in mass (and in Patagonia to a height of between 300 and 400 feet), within the period of the now existing sea-shells. The old and weathered shells left on the surface of the upraised plain still partially retain their colours. The uprising movement has been interrupted by at least eight long periods of rest, during which the sea ate deeply back into the land, forming at successive levels the long lines of cliffs, or escarpments, which separate the different plains as they rise like steps one behind the other. The elevatory movement, and the eating-back power of the sea during the periods of rest, have been equable over long lines of coast; for I was astonished to find that the step-like plains stand at nearly corresponding heights at far distant points. The lowest plain is 90 feet high; and the highest which I ascended near the coast, is 950 feet; and of this, only relics are left in the form of flat gravel-capped hills. The upper plain of Santa Cruz slopes up to a height of 3000 feet at the foot of the Cordillera. I have said that within the period of existing sea-shells, Patagonia has been upraised 300 to 400 feet: I may add, that within the period when icebergs transported boulders over the upper plain of Santa Cruz, the elevation has been at least 1500 feet. Nor has Patagonia been affected only by upward movements: the extinct tertiary shells from Port St. Julian and Santa Cruz cannot have lived, according to Professor E. Forbes, in a greater depth of water than from 40 to 250 feet; but they are now covered with sea-deposited strata from 800 to 1000 feet in thickness: hence the bed of the sea, on which these shells once lived, must have sunk downwards several hundred feet, to allow of the accumulation of the superincumbent strata. What a history of geological changes does the simply-constructed coast of Patagonia reveal!

Tierra del Fuego, Argentina: 55°S, 73°W

December 17th, 1832. -- Having now finished with Patagonia and the Falkland Islands, I will describe our first arrival in Tierra del Fuego. A little after noon we doubled Cape St. Diego, and entered the famous strait of Le Maire. We kept close to the Fuegian shore, but the outline of the rugged, inhospitable Statenland was visible amidst the clouds. In the afternoon we anchored in the Bay of Good Success. While entering we were saluted in a manner becoming the inhabitants of this savage land. A group of Fuegians partly concealed by the entangled forest, were perched on a wild point overhanging the sea; and as we passed by, they sprang up and waving their tattered cloaks sent forth a loud and sonorous shout. The savages followed the ship, and just before dark we saw their fire, and again heard their wild cry. The harbour consists of a fine piece of water half surrounded by low rounded mountains of clay-slate, which are covered to the water's edge by one dense gloomy forest. A single glance at the landscape was sufficient to show me how widely different it was from anything I had ever beheld. At night it blew a gale of wind, and heavy squalls from the mountains swept past us. It would have been a bad time out at sea, and we, as well as others, may call this Good Success Bay....

Bay of S. Carlos, Chile: 42°S, 73°W

January 15, 1835

On January the 15th we sailed from Low's Harbour, and three days afterwards anchored a second time in the bay of S. Carlos in Chiloe. On the night of the 19th the volcano of Osorno was in action. At midnight the sentry observed something like a large star, which gradually increased in size till about three o'clock, when it presented a very magnificent spectacle. By the aid of a glass, dark objects, in constant succession, were seen, in the midst of a great glare of red light, to be thrown up and to fall down. The light was sufficient to cast on the water a long bright reflection. Large masses of molten matter seem very commonly to be cast out of the craters in this part of the Cordillera. I was assured that when the Corcovado is in eruption, great masses are projected upwards and are seen to burst in the air, assuming many fantastical forms, such as trees: their size must be immense, for they can be distinguished from the high land behind S. Carlos, which is no less than ninety-three miles from the Corcovado. In the morning the volcano became tranquil....

Valdivia, Chile: 39°S, 73°W

February 20, 1835

...February 20th. -- This day has been memorable in the annals of Valdivia, for the most severe earthquake experienced by the oldest inhabitant. I happened to be on shore, and was lying down in the wood to rest myself. It came on suddenly, and lasted two minutes, but the time appeared much longer. The rocking of the ground was very sensible. The undulation appeared to my companion and myself to come from due east, whilst others thought they proceeded from southwest: this shows how difficult it sometimes is to perceive the directions of the vibrations. There was no difficulty in standing upright, but the motion made me almost giddy: it was something like the movement of a vessel in a little cross-ripple, or still more like that felt by a person skating over thin ice, which bends under the weight of his body. A bad earthquake at once destroys our oldest associations: the earth, the very emblem of solidity, has moved beneath our feet like a thin crust over a fluid; -- one second of time has created in the mind a strange idea of insecurity, which hours of reflection would not have produced. In the forest, as a breeze moved the trees, I felt only the earth tremble, but saw no other effect. Captain Fitz Roy and some officers were at the town during the shock, and there the scene was more striking; for although the houses, from being built of wood, did not fall, they were violently shaken, and the boards creaked and rattled together. The people rushed out of doors in the greatest alarm. It is these accompaniments that create that perfect horror of earthquakes, experienced by all who have thus seen, as well as felt, their effects. Within the forest it was a deeply interesting, but by no means an awe-exciting phenomenon. The tides were very curiously affected. The great shock took place at the time of low water; and an old woman who was on the beach told me that the water flowed very quickly, but not in great waves, to high-water mark, and then as quickly returned to its proper level; this was also evident by the line of wet sand. The same kind of quick but quiet movement in the tide happened a few years since at Chiloe, during a slight earthquake, and created much causeless alarm. In the course of the evening there were many weaker shocks, which seemed to produce in the harbour the most complicated currents, and some of great strength.

Concepción, Chile: 37°S, 73°W

March 4, 1835

March 4th. -- We entered the harbour of Concepcion. 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, etc., 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 high on the 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 fractures 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....

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador: 0°S, 90°W

September 15, 1835

September 15th. -- This archipelago consists of ten principal islands, of which five exceed the others in size. They are situated under the Equator, and between five and six hundred miles westward of the coast of America. They are all formed of volcanic rocks; a few fragments of granite curiously glazed and altered by the heat, can hardly be considered as an exception. Some of the craters, surmounting the larger islands, are of immense size, and they rise to a height of between three and four thousand feet. Their flanks are studded by innumerable smaller orifices. I scarcely hesitate to affirm, that there must be in the whole archipelago at least two thousand craters. These consist either of lava or scorix, or of finely-stratified, sandstone-like tuff. Most of the latter are beautifully symmetrical; they owe their origin to eruptions of vol-

canic mud without any lava: it is a remarkable circumstance that every one of the twenty-eight tuff-craters which were examined, had their southern sides either much lower than the other sides, or quite broken down and removed. As all these craters apparently have been formed when standing in the sea, and as the waves from the trade wind and the swell from the open Pacific here unite their forces on the southern coasts of all the islands, this singular uniformity in the broken state of the craters, composed of the soft and yielding tuff, is easily explained.

Considering that these islands are placed directly under the equator, the climate is far from being excessively hot; this seems chiefly caused by the singularly low temperature of the surrounding water, brought here by the great southern

[map]

Polar current. Excepting during one short season, very little rain falls, and even then it is irregular; but the clouds generally hang low. Hence, whilst the lower parts of the islands are very sterile, the upper parts, at a height of a thousand feet and upwards, possess a damp climate and a tolerably luxuriant vegetation. This is especially the case on the windward sides of the islands, which first receive and condense the moisture from the atmosphere....

September 29th. -- We doubled the south-west extremity of Albemarle Island....

The rocks on the coast abounded with great black lizards, between three and four feet long; and on the hills, an ugly yellowish-brown species was equally common. We saw many of this latter kind, some clumsily running out of the way, and others shuffling into their burrows. I shall presently describe in more detail the habits of both these reptiles. The whole of this northern part of Albemarle Island is miserably sterile....

The natural history of these islands is eminently curious, and well deserves attention. Most of the organic productions are aboriginal creations, found nowhere else; there is even a difference between the inhabitants of the different islands; yet all show a marked relationship with those of America, though separated from that continent by an open space of ocean, between 500 and 600 miles in width. The archipelago is a little world within itself, or rather a satellite attached to America, whence it has derived a few stray colonists, and has received the general character of its indigenous productions. Considering the small size of the islands, we feel the more astonished at the number of their aboriginal beings, and at their confined range. Seeing every height crowned with its crater, and the boundaries of most of the lava-streams still distinct, we are led to believe that within a period geologically recent the unbroken ocean was here spread out. Hence, both in space and time, we seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact -- that mystery of mysteries -- the first appearance of new beings on this earth....

...The remaining land-birds form a most singular group of finches, related to each other in the structure of their beaks, short tails, form of body and plumage: there are thirteen species, which Mr. Gould has divided into four sub-groups. All these species are peculiar to this archipelago;

and so is the whole group, with the exception of one species of the sub-group *Cactornis*, lately brought from Bow Island, in the Low Archipelago. Of *Cactornis*, the two species may be often seen climbing about the flowers of the great cactus-trees; but all the other species of this group of finches, mingled together in flocks, feed on the dry and sterile ground of the lower districts. The males of all, or certainly of the greater number, are jet black; and the females (with perhaps one or two exceptions) are brown. The most curious fact is the perfect gradation in the size of the beaks in the different species of *Geospiza*, from one as large as that of a hawfinch to that of a chaffinch, and (if Mr. Gould is right in including his sub-group, *Certhidea*, in the main group) even to that of a warbler. The largest beak in the genus *Geospiza* is shown in Fig. 1, and the smallest in Fig. 3; but instead of there being only one intermediate species, with a beak of the size shown in Fig. 2, there are no less than six species with insensibly graduated beaks. The beak of the sub-group *Certhidea*, is shown in Fig. 4. The beak of *Cactornis* is

[picture]

1. *Geospiza magnirostris*. 2. *Geospiza fortis*. 3. *Geospiza parvula*. 4. *Certhidea olivacea*.

somewhat like that of a starling, and that of the fourth sub-group, *Camarhynchus*, is slightly parrot-shaped. Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends.

I will first describe the habits of the large tortoises (*Testudo nigra*, formerly called *Indica*), which has been so frequently alluded to. These animals are found, I believe, on all the islands of the archipelago; certainly on the greater number. They frequent in preference the high damp parts, but they likewise live in the lower and arid districts. I have already shown, from the numbers which have been caught in a single day, how very numerous they must be. Some grow to an immense size: Mr. Lawson, an Englishman, and vice-governor of the colony, told us that he had seen several so large, that it required six or eight men to lift them from the ground; and that some had afforded as much as two hundred pounds of meat. The old males are the largest, the females rarely growing to so great a size: the male can readily be distinguished from the female by the greater length of its tail. The tortoises which live on those islands where there is no water, or in the lower and arid parts of the others, feed chiefly on the succulent cactus. Those which frequent the higher and damp regions, eat the leaves of various trees, a kind of berry (called *guayavita*) which is acid and austere, and likewise a pale green filamentous lichen (*Usnera plicata*), that hangs from the boughs of the trees....

I have not as yet noticed by far the most remarkable feature in the natural history of this archipelago; it is, that the different islands to a considerable extent are inhabited by a different set of beings. My attention was first called to this fact by the Vice-Governor, Mr. Lawson, declaring that the tortoises differed from the different islands, and that he could with certainty tell from which island any one was brought. I did not for some time pay sufficient attention to this statement, and I had already partially mingled together the collections from two of the islands. I

never dreamed that islands, about 50 or 60 miles apart, and most of them in sight of each other, formed of precisely the same rocks, placed under a quite similar climate, rising to a nearly equal height, would have been differently tenanted; but we shall soon see that this is the case. It is the fate of most voyagers, no sooner to discover what is most interesting in any locality, than they are hurried from it; but I ought, perhaps, to be thankful that I obtained sufficient materials to establish this most remarkable fact in the distribution of organic beings.

Tahiti Island, French Polynesia: 17°S, 149°W

November 15, 1835

November 15th. -- At daylight, Tahiti, an island which must for ever remain classical to the voyager in the South Sea, was in view. At a distance the appearance was not attractive. The luxuriant vegetation of the lower part could not yet be seen, and as the clouds rolled past, the wildest and most precipitous peaks showed themselves towards the centre of the island. As soon as we anchored in Matavai Bay, we were surrounded by canoes....

Sydney, Australia: 33°S, 151°E

January 12th, 1836. -- Early in the morning a light air carried us towards the entrance of Port Jackson. Instead of beholding a verdant country, interspersed with fine houses, a straight line of yellowish cliff brought to our minds the coast of Patagonia. A solitary lighthouse, built of white stone, alone told us that we were near a great and populous city. Having entered the harbour, it appears fine and spacious, with cliff-formed shores of horizontally stratified sandstone. The nearly level country is covered with thin scrubby trees, bespeaking the curse of sterility. Proceeding further inland, the country improves: beautiful villas and nice cottages are here and there scattered along the beach. In the distance stone houses, two and three stories high, and windmills standing on the edge of a bank, pointed out to us the neighborhood of the capital of Australia.

Cocos Islands: 12° S, 96° E

April 1, 1836

April 1st. -- We arrived in view of the Keeling or Cocos Islands, situated in the Indian Ocean, and about six hundred miles distant from the coast of Sumatra. This is one of the lagoon-islands (or atolls) of coral formation, similar to those in the Low Archipelago which we passed near....

Port Louis, Mauritius: 20°S, 57°E

May 9, 1836

May 9th. -- We sailed from Port Louis, and, calling at the Cape of Good Hope, on the 8th of July we arrived off St. Helena. This island, the forbidding aspect of which has been so often described, rises abruptly like a huge black castle from the ocean. Near the town, as if to complete nature's defence, small forts and guns fill up every gap in the rugged rocks. The town runs up a flat and narrow valley; the houses look respectable, and are interspersed with a very few green trees. When approaching the anchorage there was one striking view: an irregular castle perched on the summit of a lofty hill, and surrounded by a few scattered fir-trees, boldly projected against the sky....

Ascension: 8°S, 14°W

July 19, 1836

On the 19th of July we reached Ascension. Those who have beheld a volcanic island, situated under an arid climate, will at once be able to picture to themselves the appearance of Ascension. They will imagine smooth conical hills of a bright red colour, with their summits generally truncated, rising separately out of a level surface of black rugged lava. A principal mound in the centre of the island, seems the father of the lesser cones. It is called Green Hill: its name being taken from the faintest tinge of that colour, which at this time of the year is barely perceptible from the anchorage. To complete the desolate scene, the black rocks on the coast are lashed by a wild and turbulent sea.

Falmouth, England: 50°N, 5°W

October 2, 1836

...On the 2nd of October we made the shore, of England; and at Falmouth I left the Beagle, having lived on board the good little vessel nearly five years....

Notes:

1. I must take this opportunity of returning my sincere thanks to Mr. Bynoe, the surgeon of the Beagle, for his very kind attention to me when I was ill at Valparaiso.
2. Since this was written, M. Alcide d'Orbigny has examined these shells, and pronounces them all to be recent.
3. M. Aug. Bravard has described, in a Spanish work ('Observaciones Geologicas,' 1857), this district, and he believes that the bones of the extinct mammals were washed out of the underlying Pampean deposit, and subsequently became embedded with the still existing shells; but I am not convinced by his remarks. M. Bravard believes that the whole enormous Pampean deposit is a sub-aerial formation, like sand-dunes: this seems to me to be an untenable doctrine.
4. Principles of Geology, vol. iv. p. 40.