

*Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of his Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle, between the years 1826 and 1836, by Captain P. P. King, R.N., and Captain Fitz Roy, R.N.*

*Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the various Countries visited by the Beagle, by Charles Darwin, Esq., F.R.S. 1839.—Colburn.*

These four splendid volumes are dedicated to Earl Minto, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and they are in every way entitled to be regarded in a national point of view. They form a contribution to the science, and stand as a monument of the enterprise of the country, no less complete in their execution than comprehensive in their design.

Towards the heavy costs, which a liberality of spirit, highly commendable and rather uncommon in preparing so great a work for publication, had rendered inevitable, Government has subscribed a thousand pounds—a sum totally inadequate to the object, yet conveying a sense of its value and importance, which is nobly justified by the richness of the stores of new information here poured into the treasury of knowledge.

This narrative of the surveying voyages of the *Adventure* and *Beagle*, which were originated by the Board of Admiralty in 1826, and have been continued by the direction of liberal Governments until 1836, has been laid before the public as the results of the expedition by its two gallant commanders. On Captain Fitz Roy has devolved the larger share of the literary execution and responsibility of the task, and no ornament of our navy could have a better right to congratulate himself on the result of 13 years' labour, peril, sacrifice, and triumph over difficulties all but insurmountable, than the officer whom Science should now "delight to honour."

The Narrative describes their examination of the southern shores of South America, with the *Beagle* and *Beagle's* circumnavigation of the globe. An attempt, says the preface, has been made to combine general information with the paramount object—that of fulfilling a duty to the Admiralty for the benefit of seamen. This attempt we regard as completely successful, notwithstanding that some parts must be *caviare* to the multitude, and that the work may seem to be of a rambling and mixed character in the eyes of the scientific. The *Adventure* was a strongly-built ship of 330 tons burden, without guns; it was commanded by Captain Parker King. The *Beagle* was a fine little vessel of 235 tons, carrying six guns; it was commanded in the first instance by Captain Stokes, whose death in 1828 under circumstances of painful excitement, and after an in-

trepid and adventurous discharge of his duties, forms the most mournful episode in the Narrative. To him succeeded Captain Robert Fitz Roy.

The instructions were to accomplish an accurate survey of the great coasts adverted to, from the southern entrance of the river Plata round to Chiloe and of Terra del Fuego, the *Beagle* following the same orders. They were to make, or call at, the following places successively—namely, Madeira, Teneriffe, the northern point of St. Antonio, and the anchorage at St. Jago; both in the Cape Verd Islands, the Island of Trinidad, in the Southern Atlantic, and Rio de Janeiro; for the purpose of ascertaining the differences of the longitudes of those several places.

To proceed in anything like an order of narrative is now impossible. One word describes the course; it was successful; but to particularize the points of survey or to have the vicissitudes experienced by the brave, enthusiastic, and unwearied voyagers—though this would be only bare justice—our space is as inadequate as would be a Fuegian canoe to the exigencies of the voyage. But undoubtedly it is upon the Fuegian coast that we should first be attracted to stop, strange as this may seem, by the very repulsive and odious qualities of the savage humanity of the scene. The most interesting parts of the whole Narrative are those perhaps which so graphically picture the condition of this extraordinary tribe of American Indians. The insight acquired into the nature, habits, and capabilities, moral and mental, of this race of beings, of whom *Caliban* himself is in some respects scarcely a caricature, would alone have rewarded the experiment and justified the survey. No such intimate or accurate knowledge of this tribe existed before; and not much less has been added to what has been communicated by former voyagers relative to the state and dispositions of the Patagonian Indians.

We remember no book of voyages whose leaves we have turned over with a deeper, or we might say with a more continuous interest; and rarely have greater difficulties been encountered; never have greater gallantry, discretion, intelligence, or humanity been evinced, than by the crews of the *Adventure* and the *Beagle* throughout their first voyage. The general reader will find details to skip over; but to nautical men every page will be a prize.

Having said thus much, we shall not be suspected of a feeling disparaging to the first volume from the hand of Captain King, when we confess that the second volume, which is devoted to the second voyage of the

volume, which is devoted to the second voyage of the *Beagle*, in 1831 and subsequent years, is even more interesting. Instructed to proceed to the South American station to perform operations of the highest importance, Captain Fitz Roy evinced the most remarkable aptitude for the undertaking. The interest of his voyage was considerably enhanced by his taking back with him four natives of Terra del Fuego, who had been brought to this country on the former voyage, and who had been more than half civilized; clothed, taught, baptized, and "beautified exceedingly;" so that on a comparison of their portraits, as they appeared in their native and their acquired habits, it is impossible to identify them. Their new names and estimated ages were—York Minster, 26; Best Memory, 20; James Button, 14; and Fuegia Basket, a girl, aged 9. The experiment of civilizing them, and returning them to their native shores, as specimens of what all there might become, turned out as successful as could be expected, but the relapse was fearful, notwithstanding Jemmy Button does by far the greatest credit to his English teachers, and yet he is found on the return of the *Beagle* to Fuego after no considerable absence, stript of his clothing, his cleanliness, and his civilization—naked, filthy, blear-eyed, hair-begrown, and disgusting as any of his revolting and unsightly tribe. Yet many seeds of improvement have been sown by our voyagers; and many hopes and fair prospects dawn and open even upon those shores. For the realization of these we must look to time; but for the encouragement and ripening of them, honour and thanks are due to the noble fellows under Captain Fitz Roy in the *Beagle*.

Revisiting the Patagonians, we find many matters of increased interest awaiting us; but from these the reader passes, to dwell as long as may be, upon the very curious and very gratifying sketches of the progress and present state of the inhabitants of Otaheite. The readers of Cook's Voyages, Bligh's Narrative, and numerous other works, affording an insight into the character of this people, will be surprised and delighted by the revelations of Captain Fitz Roy. Improvement is every where perceptible, and the picture which he presents with so much good feeling and evident accuracy of observation, is full of assurances of the blessings gradually being diffused among a set of people, than

whom none on the face of the earth can present at this moment features of stronger interest to the philanthropist and the Christian. Captain F., by the way, had a most delicate task to execute in his negotiation with the Queen and Council, and he discharged it with the utmost circumspection and good taste.

Following the *Beagle* from America's Southern coast to the regions just referred to, and thence again tracing its far tract towards the New Zealanders, scenes of fresh interest, views the most just, and information of essential value, are spread before us. To Captain Fitz Roy's work we should refer all who are concerned in the condition and prospects of New Zealand. His account of that colony, and many of his speculations relative to it, would alone stamp his work with value. To explore his course further, or to bestow more than a brief mention of his interesting notices of portions of the New World is, however, impracticable. Terminating this long voyage, rather exceeding that of Vancouver, it is pleasant to observe that while the *Beagle* was in commission, between February, 1829, and November, 1836, no serious illness, brought on while on service, happened on board; no accident of consequence occurred in the ship; nor did one man fall overboard during all that time.

The closing chapters of the second volume are devoted to two disquisitions—one on the Early Migration of the Human Race; the other has reference to the Deluge, in connection with facts witnessed during the *Beagle's* voyage. They are ably written, and denote a mind highly cultivated and capable of curious reflection.

The third volume consists of an appendix to the second; the documents contained in it are more or less attractive to the general reader. This we pass over, to point attention to the *Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the various countries explored*, which Mr. Darwin has appended to the narrative. This work is published separately, and proves the active part which Mr. Darwin took in prosecuting the objects of the voyage. His arduous labours in research, and his zeal and enthusiasm as a naturalist, are here apparent—not to speak of the many other forms in which his investigations have been rendered available to science.

We may confidently predict for this volume, as an important part of the record of the results of a most successful expedition, a high estimation not merely by the members of the Society (the Geological), of which Mr. Darwin is Secretary, but by botanists, zoologists, and other explorers, whose studies have been aided and whose objects have been advanced by his labours.

Lastly—for we must bring our notice, scanty as it is, to a close—we have to award a high meed of praise to the illustrations of this valuable work. They are scattered through the chapters with singular profusion, and many of them are in a style of art very far superior to the ordinary class of book embellishments. Many of the little views are beautiful, and all are well engraved; but our favourites are the masterly etchings of Thomas Landseer. Captain Fitz Roy's clever pencil seems to have chiefly supplied the sketches for these; and the artist has given to them the most bold, striking, picturesque, and natural effect that could be desired.