

A Naturalist on the "Challenger."

CHAPTER I.

TENERIFE, ST. THOMAS, BERMUDA.

Circumstances of the Voyage. Tenerife. Cochineal Plantations. Excursion up the Peak. Trade-wind Cloud. Zones of Vegetation. Sunset seen above the Clouds. Rabbits and other Animals on the Peak. Peculiar Spider's Web. Catching Sharks off Sombrero Island, West Indies. Appearance and Habits of Remora. Pilot Fish. Island of St. Thomas. Calcareous Seaweeds. Sea Urchins with Poisoned Spines. Burrowing Spider. Nest of Termites. Pelicans edible. Sand-box Tree. Defensive Colouring of Spines of Cacti. Beach Conglomerate. Sea-beans. Bermuda. Calcareous Sand-rock. Caves. Vegetation. Peat. Boatswain Birds. Land Nemertine. Corals in Caves.

Circumstances of the Voyage.—H.M.S. "Challenger," a main-deck corvette, with auxiliary steam power, left Portsmouth on December 21st, 1872, for a voyage of three years and a half round the world. The object of her cruise was to investigate scientifically the physical conditions and natural history of the deep sea all over the world. The ship was with that aim specially fitted with sounding and dredging apparatus, and carried a scientific staff, appointed by the Lords of the Admiralty, and placed by them under the direction of Sir Charles Wyville Thomson, F.R.S., etc. I accompanied the expedition as one of the naturalists on this staff.

In consequence of the special nature of the mission, the sea voyages were tedious and protracted, the ship being constantly stopped on its course to sound and dredge. Since the results obtained by deep-sea dredging, even in most widely distant localities, were very similar and somewhat monotonous, all reference to them will be deferred to the end of this narrative, where their natural-history aspects will be discussed