



Juan Fernandez, November 13th to 15th, 1875.—The voyage to Juan Fernandez occupied six weeks, as we had the bad fortune to be becalmed for 12 days on the passage. It was with the liveliest interest that we approached the scene of Alexander Selkirk's life of seclusion and hardship, and an island with the existence of which, in the case of most of us, the very fact that we were at sea on a long voyage was more or less distantly connected. The study of Robinson Crusoe certainly first gave me a desire to go to sea, and "Darwin's Journal" settled the matter. Defoe was obliged to lay the scene of his romance in the West Indies, in order to bring in the Carib man, Friday. He thus gained the Parrot, but he lost the Sea-Elephants and Fur-Seals of Juan Fernandez, one of the latter of which would have made a capital pet for Crusoe.

The island is most beautiful in appearance. The dark basaltic cliffs contrast with the bright yellow-green of the abundant verdure; and the island terminates in fantastic peaks, which rise to a height of about 3,000 feet. Especially conspicuous is a precipitous mass which backs the view from the anchorage at Cumberland Bay, and which is called from its form "El Yunque" (the anvil).

There are upwards of 24 species of Ferns growing in this small island, and in any general view the Ferns form a large proportion of the main mass of vegetation. Amongst them are two Tree Ferns, one of which I only saw amongst the rocks in the distance, but could not reach. The preponderant Ferns, especially the Tree Ferns, give a pleasant yellow tinge to the general foliage. Curiously enough the almost cosmopolitan common Brake Fern (*Pteris aquilina*) does not occur in the island. Four species of the Ferns out of the 24 present are peculiar to the island, and one, *Thyrsopteris elegans*, is of a genus which occurs only here. The appearance of this Fern is very remarkable, for the cup-shaped sori hang down from the fronds in masses, looking just like bunches of millet seed. This is the only known instance of a special genus of Ferns being confined to an isolated small island.

Everywhere for the first few hundred feet, trees are absent, the wood having been all felled. In 1830 a large quantity of