

dry old sandal-wood still remained in the valleys; but even then there were no growing sandal-wood trees remaining.* No doubt the general appearance of the vegetation is very different now from what it was when the island was first visited.

I landed and climbed with a guide a steep path leading directly up from the Bay to Selkirk's Monument. The island is rented from the Chilian Government as a farm by a Chilian, who employs a number of labourers and rears cattle and grows vegetables, doing a very fair trade with passing vessels, the crews of which, like our own, after a voyage from such a port as Tahiti, long for a little wholesome fresh food. A considerable sum is also realised by the sale of the skins of the Fur-Seals. Close to the farmhouse at the Bay still remains a row of old caves dug out in the hill side by the Buccaneers.

In ascending the path the first tree was met with at about 700 feet altitude, all below had been cut down. We passed through a hollow overgrown by a dense growth of the gigantic Rhubarb-like *Gunnera chilensis*. Darwin remarked on the large size of the leaves of this plant and height of its stalks as seen by him in Chile.† The stalks of the plants he saw were not much more than a yard in height. In this hollow the stalks must have been 7 feet in height. We walked through a narrow passage cut in a thicket of them with the huge circular leaves above our heads. The leaves catch and hold a large quantity of rain-water. The size attained by the *Gunnera* varies with its situation. In many places the leaves are very conspicuous on the hill-slopes, crowding closely as an undergrowth, and not rising high above the ground.

It was now Spring in Juan Fernandez, as at Tahiti. Most excellent Strawberries grow wild about the lower slopes of the island, and especially well on banks beneath the cliffs close to the sea-shore. The Strawberries are large and fine, but white in colour, being, I believe, a Spanish cultivated variety. If so, they have not at all reverted to the parent wild form, either in colour or size; a few only were just beginning to ripen.

At this time of the year the foliage of the Myrtles, though evergreen, looks half dead, and thus these trees show out conspicuously amongst the rest. Here and there examples of the Magnoliaceous Tree "Winter's Bark" (*Drymis Winteri*), a tree common in the Straits of Magellan, were covered with showy

* "Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of H.M.S. 'Adventure' and 'Beagle,'" Vol. I., p. 302. London, 1839. Visit of Capt. King, H.M.S. 'Adventure,' accompanied by Signor Bertero the Botanist, Feb., 1833."

† C. Darwin, "Journal of Researches," p. 279.