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SCIENCE IN BRITAIN

By Sir Richard Gregory, Bt., F.R.S.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in the year 1831. In the same year the world-renowned naturalist, Charles Darwin, left England in H.M.S. Beagle as a member of the famous expedition to the Pacific. Between 1831 and 1836 the expedition surveyed the South American coasts and adjacent islands, including the Galapagos Islands, and also the coasts of Australia and New Zealand. Darwin recorded that the voyage was the most important event in his life and it determined his whole career. The geological and other natural history notes made by him during the voyage, especially along South America, were the basis of most of his later works.

Exactly a century ago, Darwin prepared a short account of the facts observed by him which indicated relationships between different living things and suggested a common line of descent. Also, in the year 1842, was published his great work on “The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs,” which gave the results of his own observations of coral atolls in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and threw new light upon their structure. He suggested that cores should be obtained by borings of such reefs in order to discover how deep the coral rock extended below the limit of about thirty fathoms in which the coral organisms can live. The British Association was the first body to set