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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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DARWIN'S BAROMETER

In the classic narrative of his voyage on the "Beagle" Charles Darwin makes no mention of a barometer -- or at any rate, the word "barometer" is not found in the copious index of the book -- but he used one during the voyage and, according to a note in Nature, it is now on exhibition, with other Darwin relics, at Down House, his home in Kent. The barometer was lent for the exhibition by the Royal Society. It was made by the firm of Newton and has been restored by Messrs. Negretti & Zambra, of London, under the advice of the Meteorological Office. The scales have been re-engraved and the instrument is now in working order, as Darwin had it.

The instrument is of the straight type, contained in a wooden case three feet long, with a thermometer near the base. The scale reads down to 18.2 inches, so that it was suitable for use up to fairly high altitudes, and Darwin is said to have carried it on his land excursions, which included a good deal of mountaineering.

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