

of Edentata; namely, the *Megatherium*, *Megalonyx*, and *Mylodon*. Within nearly this same period (as proved by the shells at Bahia Blanca) South America possessed, as we have just seen, a mastodon, horse, hollow-horned ruminant, and the same three genera (as well as several others) of the Edentata. Hence it is evident that North and South America, in having within a late geological period these several genera in common, were much more closely related in the character of their terrestrial inhabitants than they now are. The more I reflect on this case, the more interesting it appears: I know of no other instance where we can almost mark the period and manner of the splitting up of one great region into two well-characterized zoölogical provinces. The geologist, who is fully impressed with the vast oscillations of level which have affected the earth's crust within late periods, will not fear to speculate on the recent elevation of the Mexican platform, or, more probably, on the recent submergence of land in the West Indian Archipelago, as the cause of the present zoological separation of North and South America. The South American character of the West Indian mammals<sup>1</sup> seems to indicate that this archipelago was formerly united to the southern continent, and that it has subsequently been an area of subsidence.

When America, and especially North America, possessed its elephants, mastodons, horse, and hollow-horned ruminants, it was much more closely related in its zoölogical characters to the temperate parts of Europe and Asia than it now is. As the remains of these genera are found on both sides of Behring's Strait<sup>2</sup> and on the plains of Siberia, we are led to look to the northwestern side of North America as the former point of communication between the

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<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Richardson's Report, p. 157; also L'Institut, 1837, p. 253. Cuvier says the kinkajou is found in the larger Antilles, but this is doubtful. M. Gervais states that the *Didelphis crancrivora* is found there. It is certain that the West Indies possess some mammifers peculiar to themselves. A tooth of a mastodon has been brought from Bahama: Edin. New Phil. Journ. 1826, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> See the admirable Appendix by Dr. Buckland to Beechey's Voyage; also the writings of Chamisso in Kotzebue's Voyage.