

that is, at the commencement of the dry season. It is evidently the tree mentioned by Darwin as occurring on the Peak.¹

A horrible pest, a stinging plant, *Jatropha urens*, one of the Euphorbiaceæ, is everywhere very common; it has a thick green stem and leaves, resembling those of our common garden geraniums in shape, and a small white flower, and is covered with fine sharp white bristles, which sting most abominably. To gather specimens they had to be lassoed with a string, kicked up by the roots, and carried on board carefully slung on a stick. The stinging sensation produced by the plant lasts for more than two days, the pain being like that of the nettle, but far more intense.

Mount St. Michael is a conical outlying island mass of phonolite,² 300 feet in height. It is comparatively inaccessible, and owing to its steepness has never been cultivated, hence it seemed likely to yield a fair sample of the indigenous flora of the group. Most of the plants collected there proved, when examined at Kew, to be common Brazilian forms, but a Fig Tree (*Ficus noronhæ*) with pendent aerial roots like the Banyan, grows all over the upper parts of the rock, and in favourable spots forms a tree 30 feet in height; it proved to be a new species and peculiar to the island as far as is yet known.³ A complete investigation of the flora of the group is a most urgent scientific necessity.

There is a dry and a rainy season on the islands, the latter extending from January to July, and the former from July to December. In the dry season there is occasionally want of water, but rain often falls; it rained heavily during the visit of the Expedition on September 2nd.

The principal bird inhabitants of the island were Boobies and Noddies of the same species as at St. Paul's Rocks, but far shyer here, and Boatswain-birds and Frigate-birds (*Tachypetes aquila*); these latter soared high overhead, looking, with their forked tails, like large kites. All these birds nest on the Peak. The woods are also full of flocks of reddish-brown Doves (*Peristera geoffroyi*), a species which occurs in Brazil, and has possibly been introduced into the island. They are in vast numbers, and being scarcely ever shot at, were so tame that stones had to be thrown at them to make them take wing. Many of them had nests and eggs, and they probably breed all the year round.

Two Lizards which are South American in their affinities occur in the islands,⁴ *Thysanodactylus bilineatus*, one of the Iguanidæ, occurs also in South America; the genus is distinguished by a scaly projection on the outer side of the hinder toes; this Lizard, which was originally obtained on the island by the officers of H.M.S. "Chanticleer," was not met with. The other Lizard, *Euprepes punctatus*, belongs to the Scincidæ,

¹ Darwin, Journal of Researches during the Voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle," p. 11, ed. 1879.

² A typical phonolite composed of sanidine, augite, nepheline, magnetite, noseane, or hauyne and titanite.

³ D. Oliver, F.R.S., Icones Plantarum, vol. xiii. p. 18, t. 1222.

⁴ Gray, British Museum Catalogue of Lizards, p. 193, 1845.