

CHAPTER XV.

ARU. KE. BANDA. AMBOINA. TERNATE.

Appearance of the Aru Islands. Trees Transplanted by the Waves. Masses of Drift Wood. Malay Language. Ballasting a Guide. Management of Clothes during Rain. Back Country Natives. Great Height of the Trees. Nests of the Metallic Starling. Parrots and Cockatoos. Bird Winged Butterflies. Shooting Birds of Paradise at Wanumbai. Deposit of Lime in Streams. Boat Crews from the Ke Islands. Fungus Skin Disease. Ke Island Dancing. Houses at Ke Dulan. Leaf Arrows. Bird caught in a Spider's Web. Ascent of the Volcano of Banda. Algæ Growing in the Hot Steam Jets. Numerous Insects at the Summit. Alteration in Sea Level, Marked on Living Corals. Nutmeg Plantations. Transportation of Seeds by Fruit-Pigeons. Saluting at Amboina. Danger to the Eyes in Diving for Corals. Raised Reefs. Myrmecodia and Hydnohytium. Moluccan Deer. Ternate Island. Chinese and their Graves. Sale of Birds of Paradise. Ascent of the Volcano. The Mountain Vegetation. The Terminal Cone. View from the Summit.

The Aru Islands, September 16th to September 23rd, 1874.—

On our way to the Aru Islands we crossed the Arafura Sea, which lies to the west of New Guinea. The sea is extremely shallow, being only from 30 to 50 fathoms in depth. After a voyage of six days, from Torres Straits, we sighted the southern part of the Aru Islands, so familiar to naturalists from Mr. Wallace's account of them, in his "Malay Archipelago," and so full of interest to us as the home of Birds of Paradise.

We sailed along the western coast of the islands. The southern portions are not covered with forest, but appeared in the distance as open grassy downs, and immediately further north similar open country occurs frequently, in patches, amongst the forest. The grass, though it appears like turf in the distance, is probably tall and reed like. A line of cliffs of no great height forms the coast line. The low cliffs are broken at intervals, and there the coast is wooded and shows a white sandy beach.

The cliffs appear as if formed of a stratified ferruginous red rock. Here and there were conspicuous white patches on the cliffs, the nesting-places of Boobies, of which large flocks were seen flying to roost as evening came on.