THE

VOYAGE OF H.M.S. CHALLENGER.

BOTANY.

REPORT on the Botany of the Bermudas and various other Islands of the Atlantic and Southern Oceans. By W. Botting Hemsley, A.L.S.

THE BERMUDAS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Physical Conditions of the Islands.

The Bermudas consist of an irregular chain of islets twenty-five miles long and somewhat in the form of the letter J; and, without counting the smaller rocks, they number about one hundred, lying in the Western Atlantic, between 32° 14′ and 32° 23′ N. latitude, and 64° 38′ and 64° 53′ W. longitude, thus being nearly 580 nautical miles from the nearest land, Cape Hatteras in North Carolina. The principal islets are so close together that there is continuous communication by bridges from St George Island in the north to Somerset Island, nearly at the extremity of the curve at the other end of the chain. Bermuda itself, the largest island, is nowhere more than three miles across, and the highest land in the group does not exceed 250 feet above the level of the sea. The coast is either rocky, presenting an irregular surface of weather-worn calcareous sandstone, or sandy, the sand being blown up into dunes covering extensive tracts. In the interior hollows are peat-bogs or marshes of considerable area; yet there is nowhere a running stream, or even so much as a permanent pond or pool. It has been stated [1] that there is not a trace of a stream or pool, or even of a ditch, the rain sinking through the soil where it falls as it might through a sieve; but it must be otherwise at certain seasons, for Mr Moseley [2] says that sheets of shallow water, sometimes as much as a quarter of a mile long, occur in some of the valleys and hollows inland. Several of them were passed on the road from Hamilton to Somerset Island.

[1] Sir Wyville Thomson in *Nature*, vol. viii. p. 267.

[2] *Journ. Linn. Soc. Lond.*, vol. xiv. p. 319.