

## SOUTH TRINIDAD.

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### INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

TRINIDADE, or South Trinidad, as it is designated, for the sake of distinction, in this work, is a rocky, mountainous island of volcanic origin, about three miles in extreme length and less than a mile and a quarter across at its widest part. It is situated in the South Atlantic, in lat.  $20^{\circ} 30' S.$  and long.  $29^{\circ} 22' W.$ , or about 600 miles from the coast of Brazil. A range of hills traverses it lengthwise, and this central ridge slopes gently towards the coast on the northeast side, while on the southwest side a number of spurs jut out from it to the sea, with alternating valleys or plateaus; and the highest point slightly exceeds 2000 feet.

The botany of this solitary island is still very imperfectly known, but it is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when it will be thoroughly investigated, for the little that is known indicates a most interesting flora. Apparently the only botanist who has ever set foot on the island is Sir Joseph D. Hooker. This happened on Sir James Ross's outward voyage to the Antarctic regions, but no stay was made. A party landed in Northwest Bay, where, however, it was impossible to scale the cliffs, and the only botanical results of the trip were two sedges, a grass, and a fern. The inability to reach the interior was particularly disappointing, as tree-ferns and other arboreous vegetation were seen by the aid of a telescope from the ship. From that date (1839) until 1874, when Dr Ralph Copeland made an excursion into the interior of South Trinidad, nothing further seems to have been done towards exploring the island.

Dr Copeland, of the Dunecht Observatory, Aberdeen, was attached to the expedition that went out in the "Venus" to observe the transit of the planet Venus; and he had the good fortune to land at a point whence he could get into the interior. A report of this visit has been published,<sup>1</sup> together with the names of the few plants collected by him. The following notes, while embodying some of our own observations on the plants, is essentially the substance of Dr Copeland's report.

The island was approached from the northwest, where a number of frigate-birds and red geese were encountered, and some were shot. A fine view was obtained of the "Nine-Pin" or "Monument," a basaltic, tower-like rock, about 150 feet in diameter and 820 feet

<sup>1</sup> Abhandlungen des naturwissenschaftlichen Vereines zu Bremen, vii.