

KERGUELEN ISLAND.

THE flora of Kerguelen Island has so recently been exhaustively treated by Sir Joseph Hooker¹ and other botanists, that there is no necessity for an original investigation of it in this work. Still, this being the largest island of several, including Marion, the Crozets, and Heard, which have exactly the same kind of vegetation, it seems desirable to give an enumeration of the plants here, as well as a few particulars concerning the position, area, and aspect of the island. For the purposes of this work, the following extracts from Mr Moseley's account of the island will suffice.² It should be mentioned that Mr Moseley's collection was included by Sir Joseph Hooker in the above-cited elaboration of the flora. The composition and distribution of the elements of the Kerguelen flora are examined and briefly discussed in the ensuing account of the botany of Heard Island.

“Kerguelen Island, or Kerguelen's Land, extends from about lat. 48° 39' S. to lat. 49° 41' S. Its southernmost point is therefore in about corresponding latitude to the Lizard in Cornwall, which is a little below 50° N. In longitude, very roughly speaking, Kerguelen Island corresponds with the Island of Rodriguez, the Maldive Islands, Bombay, Tobolsk, and the mouth of the river Obi.

“The extreme length of the island is about eighty-five miles, and the extreme breadth seventy-nine miles; but the coast is so much indented by sounds or fjords, that the area of the island is not more than, very roughly, 2050 square miles, or about three times as great as that of Oxfordshire.

“The island lies within the belt of rain at all seasons of the year, and being reached by no drying winds, and its temperature being kept down by the surrounding vast expanse of sea, has its soil and vegetable covering permanently saturated with moisture. Further, with this fact of constant precipitation of moisture is connected the form of the island itself, since fjord formation is accomplished only by glaciation on a large scale, and this can only occur where there is a constant supply of snow. The island further lies within the line of the Antarctic drift, as do also the Crozets and Prince Edward group; and this cold current must reduce the temperature considerably. It is also within the region of prevailing westerly winds, the course of which is, in the Southern Ocean, untrammelled and undisturbed by barriers of land. Since the line of greatest length of the island lies in a north-west and south-east direction, and the coast-line, though much broken, trends on either side in the same direction, the north-east side is the sheltered one, and that, consequently, where are the safest anchorages, whilst the south-west side is the weather one.³

“Throughout, the island is mountainous, made up of a series of steep-sided valleys, separated by ridges and mountain masses, which rise to very considerable heights. Mount Ross, the highest, is

¹ *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, clxviii. pp. 5-93, tt. 1-5.

² *Notes by a Naturalist on the Challenger*, p. 184.

³ For a brief summary of the climate of Kerguelen by the Rev. A. E. Eaton, see p. 244.