

“At this time of the year the foliage of the myrtles, though evergreen, looks half-dead, and these trees thus show out conspicuously amongst the rest. Here and there examples of the Magnoliaceous tree (*Drimys confertifolia*), a tree closely allied to one common in the Straits of Magellan, were covered with showy white flowers, and large patches of a small species of dock (*Rumex*) in full flower showed out red amongst the general green, whilst a white-flowered Iridaceous plant (*Libertia formosa*) growing socially formed well-marked patches of white. A tall Verbenaceous shrub (*Rhaphithamnus longiflorus*) which was very common was covered with dark blue tubular flowers.

“Hovering over the flowering bushes and trees, were everywhere to be seen two species of humming-birds; one of which (*Eustephanus fernandensis*) is peculiar to the island, whilst the other (*Eustephanus galeritus*), of the same genus, occurs also on the mainland. A further closely allied but peculiar species occurs in the island named by the Spaniards Masafuera, or “farther out,” because it lies ninety miles to the westward of Juan Fernandez and so much farther from the Chilian coast.

“The humming-birds were extremely abundant, hovering in every bush. In the species peculiar to the island of Juan Fernandez, the male is very different in plumage from the female, being of a chocolate colour, with an iridescent golden-brown patch on the head, whilst the female is green. So different are the two sexes that they were formerly supposed to represent two distinct species, as has happened in the case of so many other birds. This endemic humming-bird seemed more abundant than the continental one. Any number of specimens might have been shot.

“In skinning some of the birds which I killed, I noticed that the feathers at the base of the bill and on the front of the head were clogged and coloured yellow with pollen. The birds, no doubt, in common with other species of humming-birds and other flower-frequenting birds, such as the Myzomelidæ, are active agents in the fertilisation of plants. I noticed pollen attached in a similar manner to the Swallow-shrike (*Artamus leucopygialis*), at Cape York. Mr Wallace concludes that the presence of these birds, as fertilisers, accounts for the abundance of conspicuous flowers in Juan Fernandez.

“There are very few insects in the island, according to the observations of Mr E. C. Reed, and only one very minute species of bee. Flies, of which there are twenty species, form the most prominent feature of the entomology of the island. Some fertilisers, either insects or birds, must act on a very comprehensive and effectual scale all over the island, as follows from the abundance of fruit yielded by the various introduced plants.

“Strawberries, cherries, peaches, apples, and figs bear well; strawberries and peaches at all events very abundantly. The wild peaches are spreading everywhere. These, the cherries and the apples, are possibly fertilised by the birds, but one would hardly suppose that the strawberries would be also thus pollenised; though at a height of 9000 feet in the Andes, I have watched humming-birds, possibly the same species as that at Juan Fernandez, hovering over the low mountain flowers, quite close to the ground, where nothing like a bush was growing.

“It would be very interesting, if it proved to be the case, that humming-birds have in this distant island adapted themselves to the fertilisation of our common garden fruits. Besides the fruit trees, there are many introduced plants with well-developed flowers which thrive in the island; a thistle is very abundant and luxuriant, as if eager to remind travellers to what race the world owes the immortal Selkirk, and a wild turnip is rapidly spreading. Possibly the abundant flies take some share in the fertilising work.

“It must be remembered, with regard to insular floras, that a plant which had developed showy