

week, so there was not much time for the naturalists to explore the botany, and, as already mentioned, the collections contain nothing strikingly peculiar. A few extracts from Moseley's account of the islands¹ may be inserted here :—

“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 thirty to fifty 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 island. 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; they 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 on the rocks 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. Masses of closely-packed tree-stems, with dense foliage crowns above, appeared lining the shore where it was flat; but no cocoanut palms were to be seen amongst them. After coasting during the whole night, Dobbo, the port of the islands, was reached in the morning. Dobbo lies on the small island of Wamma, which is separated opposite the town by a narrow channel from the large island of Wokan. The striking feature in the vegetation of Wamma, as viewed by one who has just been amongst the Pacific Islands, is the very small proportion of palms showing amongst the general mass of foliage, there being only two small clumps of cocoanut-trees near the town. The leafy masses rising above the white beach might almost be taken to be made up of elm-trees, the tree-tops being rounded in the same manner, and the whole has a dull bluish tint. As we neared Dobbo, turning up the passages between the two islands, we passed large quantities of leaves, fruits, and flowers, and branches of trees floated off from the shores, and now drifting about mingled with a floating sea-weed (*Sargassum*). Off the Kei (Ki) Islands we met with similar drifts of land vegetation and also amongst the Moluccas; and I was astonished at the large quantities of fresh vegetable matter thus seen floating on the sea.

“The sea-birds, especially terns, habitually resort to the floating logs as resting-places, and it is curious to see them in the distance appearing as if standing on the surface of the water, the logs themselves being often invisible. Not only are large quantities of fruits [containing seeds] capable of germinating thus transported from island to island, but entire living plants, even trees, are washed from island to island and transplanted by the waves.

“On the shores of Little Kei Island I found on the beach, above the ordinary reach of the waves, a large mass of the pseudo-bulbs of an epiphytic orchid with its roots complete. It was partly buried at the foot of a tree and seemed quite alive, though it had evidently been washed up in a storm. At Malanipa Island, off the coast of Mindanao Philippines, I found a young sago-palm, which was just beginning to form a stem, washed up just above the ordinary beach-line, and firmly rooted, though in an inclined position, and growing vigorously. Several authors have described the large quantities

¹ Notes by a Naturalist on the Challenger, p. 366-372.