

As every one is not familiar with the positions of the above-named islands, they may be roughly indicated, for some of the more remote ones are separated from each other by about fifty degrees of longitude and twenty-five degrees of latitude. Rarotonga, of the Hervey or Cook group, in about 160° W. longitude and 21° 5' S. latitude, is comparatively familiar to readers of travel; Palmerston lies to the north-west in the same group. Mary, Hull, Gardner, Sydney, Phoenix, and Enderbury are in the Phoenix group, the centre of which is in about 175° W. longitude and 4° S. latitude. Fanning lies in about 4° N. and 159° W.; Starbuck in about 5° S. and 156° W.; Suwarrow in about 12° 50' S. and 164° W.; and Ducie in about 25° S. and 125° W. The last named is, with the exception of Easter Island, the nearest to America of the southern islands of Polynesia, from which, however, it is distant more than fifty degrees.

In addition to the plants in the collection from the South-eastern Moluccas, both Wallace and Moseley mention four or five others which are characteristic of the region, and doubtless in places constitute a considerable proportion of the vegetation. They are:—Bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.), Rattans (*Calamus* spp.), Screw-pines (*Pandanus* spp.), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), and the Nipa-palm (*Nipa fruticans*); all of which, except *Cocos*, are exclusively Old World genera, or only extend to Polynesia. The apparent absence of the Bread-fruit (*Artocarpus incisa*, Forst.) in Arrou is noteworthy; inasmuch as Decaisne¹ records it from Timor. We assume it is not found in the Arrou Islands, because neither Wallace nor Moseley mentions it. Speaking of the food of the Aruese the former says:²—“The Aru men have no regular supply, no staff of life, such as bread, rice, mandioca, maize, or sago, which are the daily food of a large proportion of mankind. They have, however, many sorts of vegetables: yams, plantains, sweet potatoes, and raw sago; and they chew up vast quantities of sugar-cane, as well as betel-nuts, gambir, and tobacco.”

Many more interesting details of the distribution of littoral plants might be adduced, but sufficient facts are embodied in these notes and in the observations under various species in the following enumeration to give a general idea of the vegetation of tropical sea-coasts, continental as well as insular. It is clear that the present general diffusion of a large proportion of the plants inhabiting the tidal forests and sandy and muddy sea-shores of the tropics is in a great measure due to oceanic currents. The wide colonisation of cultivated tropical plants is also easily accounted for, as well as that of the weeds commonly associated with them; but, eliminating the littoral, the naturalised cultivated plants, and their concomitant weeds from a flora, there remains an endemic element in the composition of the vegetation of many oceanic islands presenting problems difficult of solution, especially if their insularity has always been what it is now; but in the flora of the South-eastern Moluccas we have, so far as the present collections are concerned, no generic endemic element.

¹ Herbarii Timorensis Descriptio, p. 169.

² Malay Archipelago, ii. p. 229.