

THE ADMIRALTY ISLANDS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

THE collection of plants made by Mr Moseley affords all that we know of the botany of the Admiralty Islands. Like that from the South-eastern Moluccas, it suffered much from damp before it reached this country, and many of the specimens were reduced to such a rotten state as to be past determination; this applies more especially to those unrecognisable from a fragment, consequently the identified species consist largely of familiar littoral plants. Practically, therefore, although Mr Moseley devoted the greater part of his time to collecting plants, the botany of the Admiralty Islands is still unknown; but from the following specimen it may safely be assumed that the peculiar element is not large, and consists mainly of species; for there are imperfect specimens of a considerable number of what are doubtless undescribed species of genera characteristic of the Malayan and Polynesian regions.

Two or three Algæ are recorded as having been previously collected at these islands by Gaudichaud, who was botanist to the French voyage round the world of the "Uranie" and "Physicienne" (1817-1820) commanded by Freycinet; and in the Botany of the voyage,¹ he mentions that they were becalmed for some days near the Admiralty Islands, yet no landing was made. What particularly struck him, was the large quantity of vegetable productions carried from the shores by the high tides, and borne hither and thither by the numerous currents which at that time alone disturbed the tranquillity of the sea. Further reference to this will be found in the Appendix to the present part, on the drift seeds and seed-vessels collected by the Challenger Expedition.

Mr Moseley contributes the following particulars of the aspect and vegetation of the islands:²—

"The Admiralty Islands are a group consisting of one large island and numerous small ones. The group lies between latitudes 1° 50' S. and 3° 10' S., and longitudes 146° E. and 148° 6' E. It forms the north-westerly termination of the long curved chain of large islands and groups of islands which, stretching roughly N.E. and S.W., is composed of the New Ireland, Solomon, and

¹ Voyage autour du monde, exécuté sur les corvettes de S. M. l'Uranie et la Physicienne; Botanique, p. 60.

² Notes on Plants Collected and Observed at the Admiralty Islands: *Journ. Linn. Soc. Lond.*, xv. p. 73.