New Hebrides groups. The large island of the Admiralty group is distant from New Hanover, the nearest large island of the chain, about 130 miles, and from the nearest point of New Guinea about 150 miles. A series of groups of small islands form connecting links between the Admiralty group and New Guinea; and a number of the smaller islands of the Admiralty group lie between the large island and New Hanover. The centre of the large or main island is placed by D'Entrecasteaux in lat. 2° 18′ S. and long. 146° 44′ E. The island, which is oblong in form, is about fifty miles in extreme length, and sixteen in extreme breadth. It has, together with its immediately adjacent islets, an area of about 550 square miles. The main island is mostly of small elevation, but contains mountain-masses rising to a height of about 1600 feet, which were visible to the eastward of the anchorage of the Challenger in Nares Anchorage. The examination of the islands made by us was confined to the extreme north-western portion of the northern coast of the main island, in the neighbourhood of Nares Bay, and to the numerous small outlying islands which, lying just off the coast, shelter that anchorage.

"The land-surface in the vicinity of Nares Bay consists of a series of low irregular ridges rising one above another, with wide flat expanses at the heads of bays on the coast, which are scarcely or not at all raised above sea-level, and thus are in a swampy condition. The mountains appear from their form to be volcanic; and it is probable that the obsidian used by the natives for their spear-heads is procured in them. A trachytic lava was found to compose one of the outlying islands; and a similar rock was observed on the mainland where it commenced to rise. A platform of coral-sand rock forms the coast-line of the main island in many places; and a similar rock is the only component of most of the small outlying islands.

"From the position of the Admiralty Islands with regard to the equator, their climate is necessarily an extremely damp one. A great deal of exceedingly heavy rain fell during the stay of the Challenger. Rain fell on five days of the seven during which we were at Nares Anchorage, the total fall being 1·66 inches. The temperature of the air ranged between 86° and 75·5° F., the mean of maximum and minimum observations being about 80° F.; and the air was loaded with moisture. Dense clouds of watery vapour hung about the forest-clad ranges, keeping the mountains most frequently concealed; and in the evenings clouds of mist hung about the lower land, looking like smoke rising from between the densely packed trees. In a bay some miles to the eastward of the anchorage of the Challenger, the mouth of a small river, apparently the outlet of the drainage of the mountains on this side, was found, and also a very small brook; but running water was not elsewhere observed, and the rain probably drains to a large extent into the swamps.

"The main island, as viewed from seawards, is seen to be densely wooded everywhere. Along the summits of the ridges cocoa-nut palms show out against the sky, accompanied by areca palms, as can be made out on a nearer view. The general dark-green mass of vegetation on the hill-sides is festooned with creepers, and shows a peculiar horizontal banding of somewhat lighter green, due to the presence in abundance of a leguminous tree (*Acacia ?*), which has its branches and leaves spread in a succession of horizontal layers, contrasting strongly with the general mass of more vertically directed foliage. A closely similar appearance strikes the eye at first sight on viewing the vegetation of the Banda Islands. The tree producing the effect is probably the same in both cases. Unfortunately, of this, as of all the other high trees, no specimens were procured.

"The smaller outlying islands, dotted about in front of the main island, are all thickly wooded. The inhabited ones are distinguished at once by the large number of cocoa-nut trees growing upon them, and forming the main feature of their vegetation.