

APPENDIX.

ON THE DISPERSAL OF PLANTS BY OCEANIC CURRENTS AND BIRDS.

HISTORICAL.

IN collecting the material for the reports on the vegetation of the various oceanic islands dealt with in this work, many interesting facts concerning the active part played by the sea itself in the dispersion of plants have come to light; and, as Mr Moseley devoted special attention to this subject during the voyage of the Challenger, a brief review of the evidence before us appropriately follows here. It is true that Mr Moseley has already recorded¹ many of his observations, but they are scattered, and to a certain extent inaccessible, while a considerable collection of drift seeds and seed-vessels made by him about seventy miles north-east of Point D'Urville, New Guinea, has hitherto remained undescribed.

The diffusion of plants by oceanic currents and tides is by no means a new subject of inquiry, having long ago engaged the attention of some of the foremost writers on plant distribution; and isolated facts relating thereto are recorded in various books of travel and other publications. Among the earlier notices of the transport of seeds by the sea are those relating to various American kinds thrown up on the western coast of Europe. Sloane² gives "an account of four sorts of strange beans frequently cast on shore in the Orkney Isles," which he states were very fresh, being little injured by the sea. Three of them he recognised as having been seen by him growing in Jamaica: they were *Entada scandens*, *Guilandina bonduc*, and *Mucuna pruriens*. That the *Entada* retains its germinative power after the transport across the Atlantic we have evidence,³ from the fact that five plants were raised at Kew from seeds collected in the Azores. Again, Robert Brown states⁴ that Sir Joseph Banks informed him that he had received the drawing of a plant, which his correspondent assured him was raised from a seed found on the west coast of Ireland, and that the plant was indisputably *Guilandina bonduc*. Tønning⁵ has the following note on fruits stranded in Norway: "Præter hasce jam memoratas Plantas spontaneas nec omittere possum Fructus nonnullos Americanos, qui ad oras nostras maritimas quovis fere anno rejiciuntur. Aut per oceanum, quo via ex America patet, aut et interdum, quod tamen rarius, per naufragia ad nostra litora transnatant." The fruits he

¹ Notes by a Naturalist on the Challenger, *passim*.

² *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 1696, xix. p. 298.

³ *Natural History Review*, 1863, p. 196, in note.

⁴ Tuckey's Narrative of an Expedition to explore the River Zaire, Appendix v., p. 481.

⁵ *Amœnitates Academicæ*, vii. p. 477.