

would have been very difficult to walk along without becoming giddy. It was as if one were walking along the top of an immensely high wall.

Here and there small *Metrosideros* trees grew upon the centre of the crest of the ridge, and when these were encountered it was necessary to climb between the branches, often where they overhung a sheer drop below, and once to swing along the steep side of the crest for a short distance past one of these trees under its overhanging branches.

The crest of the ridge was ascended until an altitude of 4000 feet was reached, when the guides found the way barred by a precipice and entirely impracticable. The summit of the ridge was covered with a thick growth of the Fern (*Gleichenia dichotoma*) and a Climbing Fern (*Lygodium*), and amongst the bushes on the ridge a Whortleberry (*Vaccinium*) was very abundant, and also two species of *Metrosideros*. The entire vegetation was different from that below. One of the species of *Metrosideros* was, however, also seen growing much lower down.

Just as the ridge met the face of the mountain, by which the party was brought to a halt, its crest widened out, and here there was a damp hollow with mosses and lichens growing in it in great abundance. Here also grew a tree (*Fitchia nutans*), 20 feet in height, and with a trunk 9 inches in diameter, belonging to the Compositæ, with a large yellow flower. It is allied to the Composite trees of Juan Fernandez and nearly related to the Chicory.

Here in the soft loose soil, amongst the moss, were numerous burrows of a Petrel (*Procellaria rostrata*). The natives call it the "Night Bird," just as the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha call the Burrowing Petrels there "Night Birds." The Tropic Birds also nest far up in the mountains, and in Hawaii they nest in the cliffs of the crater of Kilauea at an altitude of 4000 feet. Similarly a Puffin (*Puffinus nugax*) nests at the top of the Korovasa Basaga Mountain, in Viti Levu Island, Fiji,¹ and in like manner, a *Procellaria* breeds in the high mountains in Jamaica.

It seems possible that these birds may carry Alpine plants as seeds and spores attached to their feathers from one island to another, for great distances. They make their holes in the ground where it is densely covered with herbage, and often become covered with vegetable mould. The Procellariidæ, widely wandering as they are, have probably had a great deal to do with the wide distribution of much of the Antarctic flora. Grisebach² lays stress on the range of the Albatross (*Diomedea*) from Cape Horn to the Kurile Islands, as possibly accounting for the occurrence of northern species of plants amongst the southern flora, and also the wide range of the Antarctic flora. He supposes the seeds, however, to be swallowed by the Albatross, with its food, after being washed down into the sea by rivers, and perhaps swallowed by fish.

¹ Finsch u. Hartlaub, Ornithologie der Viti, Samoa und Tonga Inseln; Einleitung, p. xviii., Halle, 1867. Peale describes the habit in question of *Procellaria rostrata* at Tahiti.

² A Grisebach, Vegetation der Erde, Bd. ii. p. 496.