

to reach the interior of the island, though they climbed the cliffs to a considerable height. Concerning this part, Mr Knight says :—

“ What struck us as remarkable was, that though in this cove there was no live vegetation of any kind, there were traces of an abundant extinct vegetation. The mountain slopes were thickly covered with dead wood—wood, too, that had evidently long since been dead ; some of these leafless trunks were prostrate, some still stood up as they had grown ; many had evidently been trees of considerable size, bigger round than a man’s body. They were rotten, brittle, and dry, and made glorious fuel. This wood was close-grained, of a red colour, and much twisted. When we afterwards discovered that over the whole of this extensive island, from the beach up to the summit of the highest mountain—at the bottom and on the slopes of every now barren ravine, on whose loose rolling soil no vegetation could possibly take root—these dead trees were strewed as closely as is possible for trees to grow, and when we further perceived that they all seemed to have died at one and the same time, as if plague-struck, and that not one single live specimen, young or old, was to be found anywhere, our amazement was increased. At one time, Trinidad must have been one magnificent forest, presenting to passing vessels a far different appearance to that it now does. The descriptions given in the Directory allude to these forests ; therefore, whatever catastrophe it may have been that killed off all the vegetation of the island, it must have occurred within the memory of man. Looking at the rotten, broken-up condition of the rock, and the nature of the soil, where there is soil—a loose powder, not consolidated like earth, but having the appearance of fallen volcanic ash—I could not help imagining that some great eruption had brought about all this desolation.”

Land-crabs, and various kinds of sea-birds, were there in myriads, as indeed in all parts of the island. Afterwards the party landed in another part of South-West Bay, whence they proceeded to the summit of the mountain, encountering at first no living vegetation except a wiry grass, which was succeeded by dwarf ferns, and then on the higher parts they walked through groves of tree-ferns. The north-west coast was only reached after some privations and dangerous climbing, and one night spent amid the horrors of “ millions ” of land-crabs. From the few words of description given, Mr Knight seems to have met with most of the plants collected by Dr Copeland, and one purslane (*Portulaca*) not seen apparently by the latter. The plant “ whose name I know not, spreading far and wide with rope-like creepers, bearing large leaves and pink flowers, and a bean about the size of a haricot,” was doubtless the *Canavalia* collected by Dr Copeland ; and the shrub-like myrtle on the summit, which Knight “ satisfied himself was not the young growth of the species of tree, whose dead specimens were strewn over the whole island,” perhaps the same species of *Eugenia*. Beyond the organisms mentioned, there was no life, “ not even insect.” The ravine by which Knight and his party finally succeeded in reaching the north-east coast was in all probability the same as that ascended by Copeland, for he says it was clear that no other route lay from that side up the mountains. On reaching the coast, they bore southward until they arrived at the most southerly point of the island, where they were obliged to retrace their steps. No other plants were seen ; and it is evident that very few species of vascular plants exist on the island, perhaps not half a dozen more than are accounted for in this work.