

## HISTORY OF BOTANICAL DISCOVERY IN KERGUELEN, &amp;c.

Before the visit of the Challenger Expedition nothing whatever was known of the vegetation of Heard and Marion Islands; and although many of the characteristic vascular plants of the region were collected in Kerguelen as long ago as 1766 by Mr Anderson, surgeon of the "Resolution," commanded by Captain Cook, yet they lay almost unknown until Dr (now Sir Joseph) Hooker described them after his return with Sir James Ross's Antarctic Expedition, in 1843. There were among them:—*Azorella selago*, *Cotula plumosa*, *Pringlea antiscorbutica*, *Ranunculus crassipes*, *Poa cookii*, and *Deschampsia antarctica*.

"From 1776 till 1840"—we are now quoting Sir Joseph Hooker<sup>1</sup>—"when the Antarctic Expedition, under Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir James) Ross, anchored in Christmas Harbour, Kerguelen Island is not known to have been visited by any ship of war, or by the discovery or surveying ships of any nation, though it had become the frequent resort of English and American sealers. During the stay of the Antarctic Expedition [of which Sir Joseph Hooker was botanist], all the plants enumerated by Anderson as found by him in mid-summer were refound in mid-winter, together with many more, amounting to nearly one hundred and fifty, of which eighteen were flowering plants, the other large classes being—mosses and hepaticæ, thirty-five; lichens, twenty-five; and algæ, fifty-one. These have all been described in the botany of the voyage (Flora Antarctica, 1847).

"The next visit of naturalists to Kerguelen Island was that of the Challenger Expedition in January and February 1874, when Mr Moseley collected most diligently, both in Christmas Harbour and on the coast sixty to seventy miles south-east of it. He found twenty-three flowering plants in all, including three European species (*Cerastium triviale*, *Poa pratensis*, and *Poa annua*), and three species not in the collections of the Antarctic Expedition—namely, two *Ranunculi* and an *Uncinia*. He also procured flowering specimens of the *Pringlea* and the *Lyallia*, and made large accessions to the cryptogamic flora, especially on the southern localities visited."

Subsequently, in the same year, and nearly contemporaneously, the naturalists attached to various expeditions which were stationed there to observe the transit of Venus, collected in Kerguelen, but they added, we believe, no novelties to the vascular plants.

## COMPOSITION OF THE FLORA.

The flora of Marion, the Crozets, Kerguelen and Heard Islands belongs wholly to that characteristic of the coldest regions where vascular plants exist in the southern hemisphere, and differs considerably from that of the Tristan da Cunha group and St Paul and Amsterdam Islands, at least as far as the vascular plants are concerned. It is usually termed Antarctic in contradistinction to Arctic, but it should be borne in mind that no vascular plants have been found within the Antarctic Circle, nor indeed within some degrees of it. Neither a tree nor a shrub exists, the nearest approach to the latter being the very dwarf, densely-tufted plants such as *Colobanthus*, *Lyallia*, and *Azorella*. Altogether only thirty species of vascular plants have been discovered in these islands. Of these twenty-

<sup>1</sup> *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. Lond.*, clxviii.