

Dadass, which is planted by the Malays with the pepper-vine, the latter entwining round its trunk, and supporting itself by the prickles on its stem; the soap-tree, the castor-oil plant, trunks of the sago-palm, and various kinds of seeds unknown to the Malays settled on the islands. These are all supposed to have been driven by the north-west monsoon to the coast of Australia, and thence to these islands by the south-east trade-wind. Large masses of Java teak and yellow wood have also been found, besides immense trees of red and white cedar, and the blue gumwood of Australia, in a perfectly sound condition. All the hardy seeds, such as creepers, retain their germinating power, but the softer kinds, among which is the mangostin, are destroyed in the passage. Fishing-canoes, apparently from Java, have at times been washed on shore.' It is interesting thus to discover how numerous the seeds are, which, coming from several countries, are drifted over the wide ocean. Professor Henslow tells me he believes that nearly all the plants which I brought from these islands are common littoral species in the East Indian Archipelago.<sup>1</sup> From the direction, however, of the winds and currents, it seems scarcely possible that they could have come here in a direct line. If, as suggested with much probability by Mr Keating, they were first carried towards the coast of Australia, and thence drifted back together with the productions of that country, the seeds before germinating must have travelled between 1800 and 2400 miles.

"Chamisso,<sup>2</sup> when describing the Radack Archipelago, situated in the western part of the Pacific, states that 'the sea brings to these islands the seeds and fruits of many trees, most of which have yet not grown here. The greater part of these seeds appear to have not yet lost the capability of growing.' It is also said that palms and bamboos from somewhere in the torrid zone, and trunks of northern firs, are washed on shore. These firs must have come from an immense distance. These facts are highly interesting. It cannot be doubted that if there were land-birds to pick up the seeds when first cast on shore, and a soil better adapted for their growth than the loose blocks of coral, that the most isolated of the lagoon islands would in time possess a far more abundant flora than they now have."

Another example of littoral vegetation in the Indian Ocean is afforded by a small collection in the Kew Herbarium from Diego Garcia in the Chagos Islands, recently contributed by A. Hume, Esq., R.N.

*List of Plants from Diego Garcia, Chagos Islands.*

*Portulaca quadrifida*, Linn.  
*Sida diffusa*, H. B. et K.  
*Triumfetta procumbens*, Forst.  
*Triphasia trifoliata*, DC.  
*Suriana maritima*, Linn.  
*Barringtonia speciosa*, Linn.  
*Passiflora suberosa*, Linn.  
*Guetarda speciosa*, Linn.

*Vernonia cinerea*, Less.  
*Asclepias curassavica*, Linn.  
*Striga hirsuta*, Lour.  
*Stachytarpheta indica*, Vahl.  
*Achyranthes velutina*, H. et A.  
*Rivina levis*, Linn.  
*Euphorbia pilulifera*, Linn.  
*Phyllanthus niruri*, Linn. ?

The Chagos Islands are in nearly the same latitude as the Seychelles, but about eighteen degrees to the eastward of them. Whether, associated with the common plants in the above list, there is an endemic element as in Rodriguez and in the granitic Seychelles, is not known. The remarkable feature in the vegetation of the Seychelles is the number of endemic palms. Although palms exist in other oceanic islands, nowhere else in the world,

<sup>1</sup> A comparison with our data fully corroborates this.—W. B. H.

<sup>2</sup> Kotzebue's First Voyage, iii. p. 155.