

very remarkable, for the cup-shaped sori hang down from the fronds in masses, looking just like bunches of millet seed.

Everywhere for the first few hundred feet trees are absent, the wood having been all felled. In 1830 a large quantity of dry old sandalwood still remained in the valleys; but even then there were no growing sandalwood trees remaining.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the general appearance of the vegetation is very different now from what it was when the island was first visited. In ascending the steep path leading directly from Cumberland Bay to Selkirk's Monument, the first tree was met with at about 700 feet altitude, all below had been cut down. The way led through a hollow overgrown by a dense growth of the gigantic rhubarb-like *Gunnera peltata*<sup>2</sup> (see Pl. XXXIII.). Darwin remarked on the large size of the leaves of this plant and height of its stalks as seen by him in Chili.<sup>3</sup> The stalks of the plants he saw were not much more than 3 feet in height, whilst in this hollow the stalks must have been 7 feet in height. The size attained by the *Gunnera* varies with its situation. A narrow passage was cut in a thicket of them, and the huge circular leaves were elevated far above a man's head. The leaves catch and hold a large quantity of rain water; in many places the leaves are very conspicuous on the hillslopes, crowding closely as an undergrowth, and not rising high above the ground.

The Challenger's visit was in spring, when most excellent strawberries were growing wild about the lower slopes of the island, and especially well on banks beneath the cliffs close to the seashore. The strawberries are large and fine, but white in colour, being a cultivated variety; they have not at all reverted to the parent wild form, either in colour or size; a few only were just beginning to ripen.

At this time of the year the foliage of the Myrtles, though evergreen, looks half dead, and these trees thus show out conspicuously amongst the rest. Here and there the Magnoliaceous trees "Winter's Bark" (*Drimys confertifolia*), common in the Strait of Magellan, were covered with showy white flowers, and large patches of a small species of Dock (*Rumex*) in full flower showed out red amongst the general green, whilst a white-flowered *Libertia* (*Libertia formosa*), growing socially, formed well-marked patches of white. A tall Verbenaceous Shrub (*Rhaphithamnus longiflorus*), which was very common, was covered with dark blue tubular flowers.

The common Sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), the ubiquitous weed, has climbed up the pass, and grows by the monument. The endemic Palm (*Juania australis*) has been almost exterminated, except in almost inaccessible places, as on a rock above the monument, where a group of the trees can be seen, but not reached. The terminal shoot, especially when

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of H.M.S. "Adventure" and "Beagle," vol. i. p. 302, London, 1839. Visit of Capt. King, H.M.S. "Adventure," accompanied by Signor Bertero, the Botanist, February 1833.

<sup>2</sup> *Gunnera bracteata* and *Gunnera insularis* also occur in the island.

<sup>3</sup> C. Darwin, Journal of Researches during the Voyage of H.M.S. "Beagle," p. 279, ed. 1879.