

of sea-birds inhabiting the islands, and nesting, as they do, amongst the herbage, may have been of influence in the matter by transporting seeds attached to their feathers or feet. Most of the birds are of widely wandering habits.

The island of Marion, the larger of the two forming the group, and on which alone we had an opportunity of landing, is about 11 miles in length, 8 in extreme breadth, and about 80 square miles in area. The highest point is about 4,250 feet above the sea-level. The island is entirely volcanic, and presents the usual features of volcanic islands which are of considerable age. The highest land is in the centre; and irregular slopes lead down to the sea on all sides. These slopes are of very moderate inclination, and are broken in numerous places by shallow valleys bounded by cliffs where the more ancient flows of lava have suffered denudation. These valleys are occupied by more recent lava-flows, which still retain their rough pinnacled upper surface. Further, all over the slopes and summits of the island are scattered, irregularly, numerous small cones, formed mostly of conspicuously red scoriæ. The lava is basaltic, presenting in many places in the cliffs a columnar structure. Some sand gathered on the shores of a small fresh-water lake near the sea was full of augite and olivine crystals.

The island was sighted, together with Prince Edward Island, on December 25th, but was not approached closely till the morning of December 26th. The upper part of the island was covered with snow, commencing, as usual, on the slopes as patches lying unmelted in sheltered hollows, succeeded by a general thin coating or powdering over, through which the black rock showed out in all directions, and above this, again, on the highest cones and peaks, as a continuous sheet of glistening white. The summits were enveloped in clouds, which lifted or dispersed in a partial manner from time to time. Below the snow and up amongst the patchy region, the slopes of the island were covered with a coating of green, contrasting with the dark cliffs and red lower cones, which were almost destitute of verdure and had very little snow upon them. Here and there large patches of yellow showed out amidst the green, and were conspicuous even at some distance from the shore. It was found that these patches were formed of mosses. The mosses, indeed, occurring thus in patches, some dark, some nearly white, and others yellow, form the principal features in the vegetation as seen from a distance, showing out, as they do, amongst the very uniform mixture of phanerogamic plants. The small rocky projections on the rough surfaces of the modern lava-flows, standing out dark