

chimney ornament in England (*Fungia sp.*), is most extraordinarily abundant on the shore, at a depth of one or two feet at low water, and with it an allied larger, similarly free-growing coral (*Herpetolitha limax*). The Mushroom corals cover the bottom in places in such large quantities, that a cart-load of them might be picked up in a very short time; I have nowhere seen them so common.

I visited one of the Nutmeg Plantations in Great Banda. The nutmeg is the kernel of a fruit very like a peach in appearance, which makes an excellent sweetmeat when preserved in sugar. The owner of the plantation, a very wealthy Malay native of Banda, told me that about one male tree to every fifty females was planted on the estate; he had a superstition that if a nutmeg seed was planted with its flatter side uppermost, it would be more likely to produce a male seedling.

Formerly, before the Dutch Government renounced its monopoly of the growth of nutmegs in the Moluccas, the trees were strictly and most jealously confined to the Island of Great Banda. The utmost care was taken that no seeds fit for germination should be carried away from the island, for fear of rival plantations being formed elsewhere; seeds were, however, often smuggled out.

The Government destroyed the Nutmeg trees on all the other islands of the group. It was, however, found necessary to send a Commission every year to uproot the young nutmeg trees sown on these islands by the Fruit-Pigeons, called Nutcrackers by the Dutch residents (*Carpophaga concinna*).

The various Fruit-Pigeons must have played a most important part in the dissemination of plants, and especially trees, over the wide region inhabited by them. Sir Charles Lyell,\* referring to the transportation of seeds by the agency of birds, noted especially this transportation effected by pigeons, and quotes Captain Cook's Voyages to the effect that at Tanna "Mr. Foster shot a pigeon" (obviously a *Carpophaga*), in whose craw was a wild nutmeg. †

At the Admiralty Islands very large numbers of a Fruit-Pigeon (*Carpophaga rhodinolæma*), were shot by the officers of the "Challenger." Their crops were full of fruits of various kinds, all of which I had failed to find, or reach, in the growing condition in my botanical expeditions. Amongst these fruits were abundance of wild nutmegs, and wild coffee-berries; many of the fruits were entirely uninjured, and the seeds quite fit for germination.

No doubt, when frightened or wounded by accident, the

\* "Principles of Geology," 10th Edition, Vol. II., p. 69.

† "Cook's Second Voyage," Vol. II., p. 69. London, Strachan, 1777.