

such an islet, which may be termed its growing edge, the vegetation is scanty, and there are but few trees. A binding weed loosely covers a surface composed almost entirely of sand, broken shells, and coral debris with pumice; and it is on such an unproductive soil that the *Casuarina* and *Pandani* flourish. On the lee side of the islet, which is the nucleus or oldest portion, from which the islet has been gradually growing seaward with the extension of the reef, the soil contains a much larger proportion of humus, and the vegetation is not only much denser, but is of a different character. Here, the trees form a thick belt, their branches overhanging the rising tide. The commoner kinds are: *Barringtonia speciosa*, *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, together with others, such as *Cerbera odollam* and *Ochrosia parviflora*. It is worthy of note that the fruits of nearly all the trees mentioned as forming the margin of the vegetation, whether on the lee or weather side of such an islet, float in salt water. The small cones of the *Casuarina* are, however, an exception, for they sink in salt water when they are green, and require a certain amount of drying before they can be transported by the tides and currents of the sea. Just within the line of trees that immediately borders the beach, *Cycas circinalis*, *Pandanus* spp., *Heritiera littoralis*, *Terminalia* sp., and *Cerbera odollam* commonly occur. With the exception of the fruits of the *Cycas* the fruits of all these trees float in salt water, and occur abundantly in the vegetable drift. Out of ten green fruits of the *Cycas*, all but one sank in salt water, yet this exceptional circumstance sufficiently accounts for its occurrence on the coral islets. On the whole, my observations prove that the waves afford the means of dispersal of all those trees in a coral islet which line the shore, as well as of those which form a belt immediately within them.

Proceeding further in from the beach towards the centre of the islet, huge banyans and other trees having wide-spreading buttresses are met with; many of which reach a height of 150 feet and upwards, and afford a home to numbers of fruit-eating pigeons, which largely subsist on their fruits. Conspicuous amongst these trees is a species of *Canarium*, the disgorged nuts of which frequently strew the ground beneath, a banyan (*Ficus* sp.), with large oblong fruits, and another species with spherical fruits, a species of *Eugenia*, probably a variety of *Eugenia jambos*, together with several others, the fruits of which were found in the crops of pigeons shot, and a list of which is given below. The Fruit Pigeon, therefore, is doubtless an active agent in the conveyance of seeds of such trees from island to island.

The picturesquely wooded coral islets of these seas have thus been stocked through two principal agencies. Winds and currents drift to their shores the fruits and seeds of the littoral trees which ultimately form a belt, whilst the fruit pigeons disgorge the seeds or fruits of those often colossal trees which occupy the interior. The same agencies co-operate in the dissemination of the plants inhabiting the larger islands, where the littoral trees are much the same. There are wide mangrove swamps on the coast, and lines of *Nipa* palms edging the lower courses of the streams. In addition to those already mentioned, I observed that the pigeons ate several others, including the fine laurel (*Litsea* sp.) dis-