

Ureparapara or *Bligh Island*, about 16 miles to the north-west of Rowo Reef, attains an elevation of 1,950 feet, is nearly circular in form, and about 12 miles in circumference; it is steep, too, except a few fringed reefs close in on its lee side; it is well watered, and produces abundance of taro, though but little else.

SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS.

This group is composed of seven larger islands, Vanikoro, Santa Cruz (*Nitendi*), Guerta, Volcano (*Tinakoro*), Edgecombe, Ourry, and Lord Howe, besides several smaller ones to the north and north-east of Volcano Island. Vanikoro is the southernmost of the group. It is an important island in the eyes of Europeans, not from its extent or riches, but from its being the scene of the disastrous loss of the two ships of La Perouse in 1788, an event which was not ascertained with any certainty until May, 1826, or thirty-eight years afterwards.

The group forming the Vanikoro Islands is composed of two of unequal extent: the first is not less than 30 miles in circumference; the other is not more than 9 miles. They are both high, and covered with trees to the water's edge.

Vanikoro has but a slender population. The coasts are alone inhabited, all the interior being only a dense forest, wild and nearly impenetrable.

Santa Cruz Island is thus described by Captain Tilley:—

"Santa Cruz Island is about 15 or 16 miles in length, with fringe reefs along the shore, but apparently no off-lying dangers. The north point, near the centre of the island, was found to be in lat. $10^{\circ} 40' S.$, long. $166^{\circ} 3'$. The high land extends close out on its north-east side, but towards the north-west the hills slope at some distance from the extreme, leaving a considerable extent of low land near the coast. The island is well wooded and watered, the streams in some places running through the villages into the sea.

"The natives are a fine athletic-looking race, and come off readily to the ship, bringing pigs, bread-fruit, and yams; mats, in the manufacture of which great skill is displayed, are also offered for sale. The appearance of the canoes, houses, &c., evinces great ingenuity. Canoes with out-riggers, and mostly limewashed, have a neat appearance; they have also large sea-going double canoes. The villages are large, and houses surrounded by stone fences. On the north side the villages are close to the sea, with from 300 to 400 inhabitants to each.

"The natives are apparently merry and good-natured, but not to be trusted; for without any known reason they attacked the bishop's boat on leaving a village at the north-west extremity of the island, and nearly succeeded in cutting it off. Three of the crew were wounded with arrows, and of these two died from the effects of their wounds. Their bows are formidable-looking weapons, being 7 feet in length, with arrows in proportion."

THE SOLOMON ARCHIPELAGO

extends north-west and south-east for the space of 200 leagues. It is composed of eight or ten principal islands, and many other smaller ones. The largest are Bougainville, Choiseul, Ysabel, Gaudalcanar, Malayta, and San Christoval. The last-named is stated to be 73 miles long and 23 miles broad at its widest part. Malayta is 70 miles long; Ysabel, 120 miles long, and 25 miles in its maximum breadth. The sizes of Bougainville and Choiseul have not been ascertained, but they must be of greater area than those named above. The structure of these islands is throughout the same; it is a long chain of mountains, often very lofty, which form their axes in the general direction of the group. On either side the slopes incline gently towards the sea; the shores generally appear low, and often furnished with a belt of mangroves, the edge of which is washed by the salt water. An active and vigorous vegetation covers the whole of the land, and it is only here and there that in rare intervals the soil may be seen, or only covered with ferns, or often consumed by fire intentionally. The principal islands have all the advantages of extensive land; extended plains and large rivers descend from the hills, and, if we may judge by the trees which cover the land, the soil is of great fertility.

The inhabitants of these islands are generally shorter than those of the groups previously described, and appear to be characterized by greater energy and activity than are usually exhibited. Their canoes are exceedingly graceful and light, and without the outriggers common to all others. The natives also possess large war canoes carrying from thirty to sixty men, and in these they traverse great distances, sometimes beyond the sight of land. They are skilful in carving, and most of their implements are inlaid with the mother-of-pearl shell.

LOUISIADE ARCHIPELAGO,

near the south-east end of New Guinea, embraces the following islands: Adele Island, Roussel Island, the Rénard Islands, St. Aignan Island, De Boyne Islands, the Bonvouloir Isles, D'Estrecasteaux Islands, and the Trobriand Islands.

Roussel and St. Aignan are the largest of the group; the last-named is about 27 miles in length. The others are small coral islands. This group is but imperfectly known, and little or no intercourse appears to have been had with the natives, who are said to be numerous. The known productions of the islands are cocoa-nuts, yams, bananas, and sweet potatoes.

It is probable that fuller information regarding this group will result from Captain Moresby's recent visit to the coasts of New Guinea in H.M. ship "Basilisk," under his command.

NEW BRITAIN AND NEW IRELAND

are two large islands situated between the eastern part of New Guinea and the equator; contiguous to them are numerous smaller islands.

The western part of New Britain is thus described by M. D'Urville, who visited it in 1827:—

"Rarely has nature imprinted so delicious an aspect on a country untouched by the hand of man, with such an agreeable diversity of surface and beautiful effects of perspective. The coast throughout quite safe, accessible, and washed by tranquil waves; the land gently rising in the form of an amphitheatre in various places, here and there shaded by dark forests, or by less thick vegetation, and more particularly by extensive tracts of greensward, the yellowish tints of which contrasted richly with the darker shades of the more sombre forests and woods surrounding them. The two peaks of Mount Gloucester crowned this smiling scene with their imposing masses, their majestic summits frequently hidden in the clouds. In all the western quarter, and at 12 miles distance, our horizon was occupied by the undulating lines of Rook Island, which, with New Britain, forms the Strait of Dampier."

ADMIRALTY