

a means of transport apparently so improbable. It was therefore with great interest that I found Chamisso, the justly distinguished naturalist who accompanied Kotzebue, stating that the inhabitants of the Radack Archipelago, a group of lagoon-islands in the midst of the Pacific, obtained stones for sharpening their instruments by searching the roots of trees which are cast upon the beach. It will be evident that this must have happened several times, since laws have been established that such stones belong to the chief, and a punishment is inflicted on any one who attempts to steal them. When the isolated position of these small islands in the midst of a vast ocean—their great distance from any land excepting that of coral formation, attested by the value which the inhabitants, who are such bold navigators, attach to a stone of any kind¹—and the slowness of the currents of the open sea, are all considered, the occurrence of pebbles thus transported does appear wonderful. Stones may often be thus carried; and if the island on which they are stranded is constructed of any other substance besides coral, they would scarcely attract attention, and their origin at least would never be guessed. Moreover, this agency may long escape discovery from the probability of trees, especially those loaded with stones, floating beneath the surface. In the channels of Tierra del Fuego large quantities of drift timber are cast upon the beach, yet it is extremely rare to meet a tree swimming on the water. These facts may possibly throw light on single stones, whether angular or rounded, occasionally found imbedded in fine sedimentary masses.

During another day I visited West Islet, on which the vegetation was perhaps more luxuriant than on any other. The cocoanut trees generally grow separate, but here the young ones flourished beneath their tall parents, and formed with their long and curved fronds the most shady arbors. Those alone who have tried it know how delicious it is to

¹ Some natives carried by Kotzebue to Kamschatka collected stones to take back to their country.