

PEARL ISLANDS.

In the Bay of Panama there lies a small group of islands known as Las Perlas, or the Pearl Islands, consisting of Pedro Gonzales, San José, and San Miguel; the last mentioned, also known as the Isla del Rey, is by far the largest, only twenty miles from the nearest mainland and sixty from Panama. This island is about fifteen miles long and irregularly oblong in shape, covered with low hills, which in turn are clothed with luxuriant tropical forest. The climate is hot and unhealthy, and the population consists almost entirely of negroes, who manage the affairs of the island and are very independent of the Panama Government. The pearl-diving industry having been almost abandoned, the people now grow vegetables, coco-nuts, and fruit for the Panama market.

Mr. Champion, who visited San Miguel on our behalf in April 1883, was only there in the dry season, and the "luxuriant forest" of other writers he describes as "scrubby wood." The interior was somewhat inaccessible, the few paths or tracks leading only to the patches of cultivated ground. The coast, like that of the adjacent mainland, is covered with mangrove-swamps, which can only be traversed at low water.

The Islands are in such close proximity to each other that probably the birds would be the same on each. On San Miguel 46 species were found, of which only four were considered by Mr. Bangs ('Auk,' xviii. pp. 24-33, 1901) to be well-marked island-forms, the remainder were, as might be expected from the semicircular form of the Coast of Panama, similar to those of the adjacent mainland. Some birds are undoubtedly carried across to the Islands by storms, but others perform the journey voluntarily, among them a small green humming-bird (*Chloristilbon assimilis*), which has been seen in perfectly calm weather flying straight for the Archipelago.

Certain well known butterflies from the mainland also occur, including a *Morpho* (*peleides*?), etc.