

## SECTION I

### THE BERMUDAS<sup>1</sup>

THE smallest, one of the earliest, and the most secluded<sup>2</sup> of all the American dependencies of Great Britain, the Bermudas or Somers islands have an interest out of all proportion to their size and importance.

Geography and history have made them a connecting link between the British colonies in North America and the British colonies in the West Indies. Their early story is full of romance, the history of their growth and development has much that is instructive in it. A point of call, a possession of a trading company, an emporium for passing traffic, a military and naval station, the home of a slave-holding community, a dépôt for convicts, and a colony in the fullest sense with representative institutions from the very first, this little group of coral islands only wanted native inhabitants to have been a miniature world, exhibiting every phase of colonization and containing every kind of colonist.

The Bermudas were discovered at the beginning of the sixteenth century<sup>3</sup> by a Spaniard, Juan Bermudez, from whom they take their first and best known name. His ship is said to have been called *La Garza* (the Heron), and that name also was for a short while borne by the group.

Some years later<sup>4</sup> the King of Spain received a proposal

<sup>1</sup> As the colony consists of a group of islands, the plural 'Bermudas' seems more correct than the singular 'Bermuda.'

<sup>2</sup> The Bermudas are farther from the mainland than the Falkland Islands.

<sup>3</sup> The exact date is uncertain. See the *Memorials of the Bermudas*, by Sir J. H. Lefroy.

<sup>4</sup> Probably about the year 1527.