

stroyed much sooner, if, from the effect of the tides, these frail animalcules are exposed naked to the action of a burning sun. When there occur small hollows in these heaps of inert spoils, deprived of their inhabitants, which are always covered by the water, several tufts of those lithophytes are still remarked, which, having escaped from the almost general destruction, glow with the most lively colours. Then, the families which are developed anew, not being able to build on the outside of those reefs on which the sea is constantly breaking, draw nearer and nearer the shore, where the waves now deadened have scarcely any more action upon them, as in the Isle of France, at Timor, the Papua, the Marian, and the Sandwich Islands; provided always the waters had not a great depth, as is the case at Turtle Island, of which Cook speaks, where no bottom is found between the madrepoire reefs and the island, notwithstanding the shortness of the space which exists between these two points.

If we examine these animals in the places best adapted to their growth, we shall see their different species, the forms of which, as varied as they are elegant, become rounded into balls, spread out into fans, or ramify into trees, mingling together, blending with each other, and reflecting the varied hues of red, yellow, blue and violet.

It is well known that all these alleged walls, exclusively formed of corals, are intersected with openings through which the sea enters and retires with violence; and every body knows the danger which Captain Cook ran on one occasion, on the coast of New Holland, when he had no other resource, in order to save himself from destruction, than to take the sudden resolution of attempting one of