

are the only ones capable of covering immense extents of surface, do not commence their operations at a greater depth than twenty-five or thirty feet, in order to raise their habitations to near the surface of the sea. Fragments of these species are never obtained, either with the sounding line, or upon the anchors; nor do we ever see them, unless in places where the water is shallow; while the branched madrepores, which do not form thick and continuous beds, either on the elevated places which the ocean has left, or on the shores where they still exist, live at considerable depths.

It is evident, then, that these corals have erected their fabrics on the summits of submarine hills and mountains; and that all those reefs of Taiti, the Dangerous Archipelago, Navigators' Islands, the Friendly Islands, &c. are composed of madrepores only at the surface.

We thus consider it demonstrated, that the rocks of the solid zoophytes or coral, are not capable of forming the immense bases on which the greater number of the islands that occur in the Pacific Ocean rest.

There now remains for us to state how these animals, by their union, are capable of raising small islets. Forster, as already stated, has given a very good description of the manner in which this is effected. In fact, when these animalcules have raised their habitations to the surface of the water, under the shelter of the land, and they remain uncovered during the reflux of the tide, the hurricanes which sometimes supervene, by the agitation which they produce in those shallow waters, throw up from the bottom sand and mud. These substances are detained in the sinuosities and cavities formed between the corals, and thus serve to fix them together, and connect them in-