

of the sea are usually of a circular or oval form, and surrounded by a deep and oftentimes unfathomable ocean. In the centre of each there is generally a shallow lagoon, with still water, where the smaller and more delicate kinds of zoophytes find a tranquil abode; while the stronger species live on the outer margin of the isle, where the surf dashes over them. When the reef is dry at low water, the coral animals cease to increase. A continuous mass of solid stone is then seen, which is composed of shells and echini, with fragments of corals, united by calcareous sand, produced by the pulverization of the shells of friable polyparia. Fragments of coral limestone are thrown up by the waves; these are cracked by the heat of the sun, washed to pieces by the surge, and drifted on the reef. After this the calcareous mass is undisturbed, and offers to the seeds of the cocoa, pandanus, and other trees and plants, floated thither by the waves, a soil on which they rapidly grow, and overshadow the white, dazzling surface. Trunks of trees, drifted by currents from other countries, find here at length a resting-place, and bring with them some small animals, as lizards and insects. Even before the trees form groves or forests, sea-birds nestle there; strayed land-birds find refuge in the bushes; and at a still later period, man takes possession of the newly created country. It is in this manner that the Polynesian Archipelago has been formed. The immediate foundations of the islands are ancient