

To sound the depths of the sea, a piece of lead of 30 or 40lb. is made use of, fastened to a small cord; this is a good method for common depths, but is not to be depended upon when the depth is considerable; because the cord being specifically lighter than the water, after it has descended to a certain degree, the weight of the lead and that of the cord is no more than a like volume of water; then the lead descends no longer, but moves in an oblique line, and floats at the same depth: to sound great depths, therefore, an iron chain is requisite, or some substance heavier than water. It is very probable that for want of considering this circumstance, navigators tell us that the sea in many places has no bottom.

In general, the profundities in open seas increase or diminish in a pretty uniform manner, and commonly the farther from shore the greater the depth; yet this is not without exception, there are places in the midst of the sea where shoals are found, as at Abrolhos in the Atlantic; and others where there are banks of a very considerable extent, as are daily experienced by the navigators to the East Indies.

So likewise along shore the depths are very unequal, nevertheless we may lay it down as a certain