

length, with not a perceptible gap in its continuity. There is a simple grandeur and display of power and beauty in this scene that rises even to sublimity. The unbroken thunder of the surf, with its regular peal as each succeeding billow fell first on the outer edge of the great coral rampart, almost deafens the spectator; yet such is its depth of tone that it does not interfere with any nearer and sharper sound.

Both sight and sound are such as to impress the mind with an overwhelming consciousness of the Divine majesty and power.]

The walls constructed by the polypes are always precipitous, and the sea in their immediate neighbourhood frequently attains a remarkable depth. It occasionally happens that the first plateau is destroyed or lowered by the action of the billows; the corallines patiently recommence their labour on this new basis. The island of Tahiti reposes on a volcanic nucleus whose summit rises 6590 feet above the level of the sea.

Dr. Darwin has furnished a very interesting description of the *atolls* of the Sonda; from the great naturalist's narrative we borrow some details in reference to their formation.

It was formerly believed that the circular structure of the coral reefs was determined by that of ancient volcanic craters, on whose edge or rim the polypes raised their surprising structures. But this theory is not in harmony with the facts, and it seems in general difficult to believe in the existence of a volcanic upheaval of the soil as the foundation of madreporic foundations; for the polypes cannot live beyond a comparatively inconsiderable depth of water, and one knows not how to admit that the sea-bed has everywhere been raised to this uniform level. It is more probable, then, that the foundations of the coral islands are simply natural elevations of the ocean-bottom—mountains submerged at no great distance from the surface—of which the polypes take possession as colonizers, and build thereupon their fairy edifices.

It is a very singular circumstance that the coral reefs which edge or fringe the coasts are always separated from them by a broad chan-