

there are seldom any large accumulations of coral debris. The margin is generally less abrupt; yet there is every variety of slope, from the gradually inclined bed of corals to the bluff declivity with its clinging clumps. In different parts, there are many portions still under water at the lowest tides; and here (as well as upon the outer banks) fine fishing sport is afforded the natives, who wade out at ebb tide with spears, pronged sticks, and nets, to supply themselves with food. The lover of the marvellous may find abundant gratification by joining in such a ramble; for, besides living corals, there are myriads of other beings which science alone has named, of various beautiful forms and colours, as becomes the inhabitants of a coral world.

Between the large reefs, which spread a broad surface, at the water's edge, of lifeless coral rock, sometimes of great extent, there are other patches, still submerged, that are covered with growing corals throughout. They are of different elevations under the water's surface; and though at times but a few yards in breadth, there is often alongside of them a depth of many fathoms. The mushroom shape described above is common among them; and a ship striking one with her keel may crush it and glide on. More frequently, they are at bottom like the solid reef above described, and the contest is more likely to be fatal to the vessel than to the coral patch. In a passage between two reefs near Tongatabu, called the Astrolabe channel, the sloop of war *Vincennes* ran on a coral patch, which had been laid down as a reef. It stopped the ship for a moment, but broke away under her: and in the survey of the passage afterward, says Captain Wilkes, "no shoal was found in the place where the ship had struck, and we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had destroyed it without injury to the vessel." Corals grow over these patches, as in the shallow waters about other reefs; and, as elsewhere, there are deep cavities among the congregated corals, in which a lead will sometimes sink to a depth of many feet, or even fathoms. These holes about growing reefs often give much annoyance to the boat which may venture to anchor upon them; and in many