

Island, it was found to run at the rate of two-and-a-half miles an hour. It was as rapid at Karaka, in the Paumotus, and, as Capt. Wilkes remarks, it was difficult to pull a boat against it into the lagoon.

## II. SOUNDINGS ABOUT CORAL ISLANDS.

The water around coral islands deepens as rapidly and in much the same way as off the reefs about high islands. The atoll usually seems to stand as if stilted up in a fathomless sea. The soundings of the Expedition afford some interesting results.

Seven miles east of Clermont Tonnerre, the lead ran out to 1,145 fathoms (6,870 feet), without reaching bottom. Within three-quarters of a mile of the southern point of this island, the lead, at another throw, after running out for a while, brought up an instant at 350 fathoms, and then dropped off again and descended to 600 fathoms without reaching bottom. On the lead, which appeared bruised, a small piece of white coral was found, and another of red; but no evidence of *living* zoophytes. On the east side of the island, three hundred feet from the reef, a bottom of coral sand was found in 90 fathoms; at one hundred and eighty feet, the same kind of bottom in 85 fathoms; at one hundred and thirty feet, a coral bottom in 7 fathoms; and from this it decreased irregularly to the edge of the shore reef.

Off the south-east side of Ahii (another of the Paumotus), about a cable's length from the shore, the lead, after descending 150 fathoms, struck a ledge of rock, and then fell off and finally brought up at a depth of 300 fathoms.

Two miles east of Serle's Island, no bottom was found at 600 fathoms.

A mile and a half south of the larger Disappointment Island, there was no bottom at 550 fathoms.

Near the eastern end of Metia, an island nearly north of Tahiti, no bottom was found with a line of 150 fathoms; and, a mile distant, no bottom was reached at 600 fathoms.