

Both of these stages are illustrated on the greater part of coral islands.

In the last stage, the island stands six to ten feet out of water. The surface consists of coral sand, more or less discoloured by vegetable or animal decomposition. Scattered among the trees stand, still uncovered, many of the larger blocks of coral, with their usual rough angular features and blackened surface. There is but little depth of coral soil, although the land may appear buried in the richest foliage. In fact, the soil is scarcely anything but coral sand. It is seldom discoloured beyond four or five inches, and but little of it to this extent; there is no proper vegetable mould, but only a mixture of darker particles with the white grains of coral sand. It is often rather a coral gravel, and below a foot or



BLOCKS OF CORAL ROCK ON THE SHORE PLATFORM.

two it is usually cemented together into a more or less compact coral sand-rock.

One singular feature of the shore platform, occasionally observed, remains to be mentioned. Huge masses of reef rock are sometimes found upon it, some of which lie loose upon the reef, while others are firmly imbedded in it below, and so cemented to it as to appear to be actually a part of the platform rock. Sketches of two of these masses are given above.

Figure 1 represents a mass on the island of Waterland (one of the Paumotus), six feet high and about five in diameter; it was solid with the reef-rock below, as though a part of it; and, about two feet above its base it had been so nearly worn off by the waters as to have become irregularly top-