

the eastern and western ranges of land in this Great Bank is really analogous to that of the opposite sides of the great Maldivé Atoll Group. The remaining islands and reefs are mostly isolated. In the triangular interval between the Great Bahama Bank, Florida and Cuba, lies the reef called Salt Key Bank. The northern coast of Cuba, south of this bank, and to the eastward, is bordered by coral reefs.

The following are notes from an abstract of a paper presented to the Geological Society in 1852, by Major-General R. J. Nelson, R.E., and published in the Quarterly Journal of the Society for 1853, p. 200 :—

“The loftiest land in the Bahamas, according to the maps of the Hydrographical Office, is only 230 feet above the sea. Generally speaking, the hills on the larger islands are much under 100 feet in height, and on the islets from 50 to 10 feet. The surface generally is occupied by low rocky hills, either surrounding basins or forming parts of what may once have been basins, and rarely by distinct hill and valley of the ordinary character. The bottoms of these basins are usually flat and rocky, only a few inches above the average high-water level, and have a rough and cavernous surface. Water, more or less brackish, rises and falls everywhere throughout the lower parts of these flats, though not contemporaneously with the tide,¹ or at a uniform rate. The surface is sometimes covered with grass and low bush, and sometimes it consists of the bare rock, full of hollows, which are coated or even arched over with sub-stalagmitic substance. It is in these cavities, locally termed ‘pot-holes,’ that most of the soil is found ; and in the gardens made on such ground, fruit-trees, pine-apples, Indian corn, sugar-cane, &c., grow luxuriantly. Besides these ‘rock-marshes’ there are also ordinary marshes and mangrove swamps, of no great extent or depth, which are more or less in connection with the sea. On the larger islands the rocky surface of the hills is very thinly and partially covered with ‘red earth,’ mixed in varying proportions with

¹ At Nassau, Bahamas, the tide rises from 4 to 3 feet (spring to neap) ; but at Bermuda it rises from 6 to 4½.