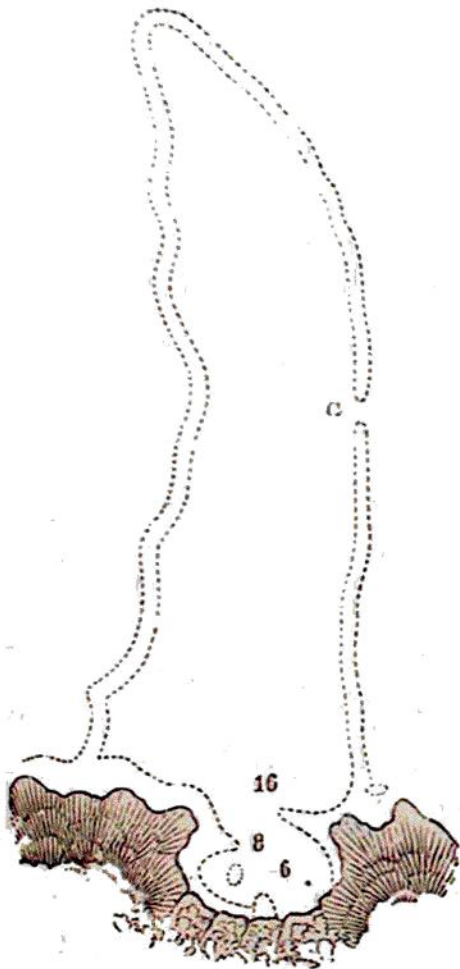


of our continents. The growing of a reef in an adjoining part of the coast, may in some instances diminish or alter the currents, and thus prepare the way for more important changes in the harbour; but such effects need seldom be feared, and results from them would be appreciable only after long periods, since, even in the most favourable circumstances, the growth of reefs is very slow.

When channels have a bottom of growing coral, they form an exception to the above remark; for since the coral is acted upon by no cause sufficient to prevent its growth, the reef will continue to rise slowly toward the surface.

Again, when the channels are more than twenty fathoms in depth, they have an additional security beyond that from currents, in the fact that corals will not grow at such a depth. The only possible way in which such channels could close, without first filling up by means of shore material, would be by the extension of the reefs from either side, till they bridge over the bottom below. But such an event is not likely to happen in any but narrow channels.



WHIPPEY HARBOUR, VITI LEVU.

In recapitulation, the existence of passages through reefs, and the character of the coral harbours, may be attributed to the following causes:—

1. The configuration and character of the submarine land;—corals not growing where the depth exceeds certain limits, or where there is no firm rocky basement for the plantation.

2. The direction and force of marine currents, with their transported detritus;—these currents having their course largely modified, if not determined, as in other regions, by the features of the land, the form of the sea-bottom and the posi-