

The whole Feejee Group, exclusive of coral islets, includes an area of about 5,500 square miles of dry land ; while, at the period when the corals commenced to grow, there were, at least, as the facts show, 15,000 square miles of land, or nearly three times the present extent of habitable surface.

III. LAGOONS OF ATOLLS.

We pass from these remarks on the channels and seas within barrier reefs, to the consideration of the seas or lagoons of coral atolls. The inference has probably been already made by the reader, that the same subsidence which has produced



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the distant barrier, if continued a step farther, would produce the lagoon island. Nanuku is actually a lagoon island, with a single mountain peak still visible ; and Nuku Levu, north of it, is a lagoon island, with the last peak submerged. This mode of origin may evidently be true of all atolls ; for, with the exception of the points of high land in the inner waters, there is no one essential character distinguishing many of the eastern Feejee Islands from the Carolines to the north. The Gambier Group, near the Paumotus, appears to have afforded