

universally north of this line, are evidence of some depression just below the line; of less farther south; and of the greatest amount north of the line or over the coral area.

b. The subsidence producing an atoll, when continued, gradually reduces its size until it finally becomes so small that the lagoon is obliterated; and, consequently, a prevalence of these small islands is presumptive evidence of the greater subsidence. We observe, in application of this principle, that the coral islands about the equator, five or ten degrees south, between the Paumotus and the Gilbert Islands, are the smallest of the ocean; several of them are without lagoons, and some not a mile in diameter. At the same time, in the Paumotus, and among the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, there are atolls twenty to fifty miles in length, and rarely one less than three miles. It is probable, therefore, that the subsidence indicated was greater at some distance north of the boundary line, over the region of small equatorial islands, between the meridians of 150° W. and 180° .

c. When, after thus reducing the size of the atoll, the subsidence continues its progress, or when it is too rapid for the growing reef, it finally sinks the coral island, which therefore disappears from the ocean. Now it is a remarkable fact that while the islands about the equator, above alluded to, indicate greater subsidence than those farther south, there is over a region north of these islands, that is, between them and the Hawaiian Group, a wide blank of ocean without an island which is nearly twenty degrees in breadth. This area lies between the Hawaiian, the Fanning, and the Marshall Islands, and stretches off between the first and last of these groups, far to the north-west.

Is it not then a legitimate conclusion that the subsidence which was least to the south beyond the boundary line, and increased northward, was still greater or more rapid over this open area; that the subsidence which reduced the size of the islands about the equator to mere patches of reef was further continued, and caused the total disappearance of islands that once existed over this part of the ocean?