

the French navigator, M. Péron, (*Ann. du Mus. tom. vi. p. 30, &c.*) that almost all those countless islands of the Pacific Ocean, which are found to the south of the equator between New Holland and the western coast of America, are either entirely or in part made up of coral: and all the adjacent ocean abounds with coral reefs, which, constantly augmenting, are constantly changing the state of bays, and ports, and gulfs; so that new charts are continually required for the same coasts. From Barrow also it appears, (*Barrow's Cochin China, p. 167,*) that the formation of coral reefs or isles is very common in the tropical parts of the Eastern and Pacific Ocean. And Captain Flinders says that the quantity of coral reefs between New Holland and New Caledonia and New Guinea, is such, that this might be called the *Corallian Sea*. (*Flinders's Voyage, vol. ii. p. 314*).

Many more references might be made, to others as well as the above-mentioned voyagers, in order to shew that the formation of coral islands is effected by nature on a very extensive scale: but, for the present purpose, the preceding references may be considered sufficient. Let us now therefore describe the general character and mode of formation of these islands.

Forster says^g that the low islands of tropical

^g Forster's *Voyage round the World*, p. 14, 15.