

“ being arrived at the surface, affords a shelter;
 “ to leeward of which their infant colonies may
 “ be safely sent forth: and to this, their in-
 “ stinctive foresight, it seems to be owing, that
 “ the windward side of a reef, exposed to the
 “ open sea, is generally, if not always, the high-
 “ est part; rising almost perpendicularly, some-
 “ times from the depth of two hundred and
 “ perhaps many more fathoms. To be con-
 “ stantly covered with water seems necessary to
 “ the existence of the animalcules; for they do
 “ not work, except in holes upon the reef, be-
 “ yond low-water mark: but the coral sand,
 “ and other broken remnants thrown up by the
 “ sea, adhere to the rock, and form a solid mass
 “ with it, as high as the common tides reach.
 “ That elevation surpassed, the future remnants,
 “ being rarely covered, lose their adhesive pro-
 “ perty; and, remaining in a loose state, form
 “ what is usually called a *key* upon the top of
 “ the reef. The new bank is not long in being
 “ visited by sea birds; salt plants take root upon
 “ it, and a soil begins to be formed; a cocoa-
 “ nut, or the drupe of a pandanus, is thrown on
 “ shore; land birds visit it, and deposit the seeds
 “ of shrubs and trees; every high tide, and still
 “ more every gale, adds something to the bank;
 “ the form of an island is gradually assumed;
 “ and, last of all, comes man to take possession ⁱ. ”

ⁱ Flinders's Voyage, vol. ii. p. 115, 116.