

although, from the fact of this group, comparatively speaking, being but little known, an extensive and careful survey is much needed. It was considered, however, unsafe to remain long amongst such people, and on the boats returning, it was decided to proceed for Torres Straits, distant 1500 miles, and having a capital breeze after us, the land was soon out of sight. During the stay off the island frequent casts of the trawl were made in 50 fathoms, but there was nothing of interest obtained.

On the 21st we sounded in 2325 fathoms, and on the 24th in 2450 fathoms. We were now off the Louisiade Archipelago, and might fairly be said to have entered the Coral Sea—a most expressive and appropriate name for this dangerous part of the Pacific. Frequent soundings showed a depth varying from 2000 to 2500 fathoms as we proceeded on for Raine Island, which was sighted on the 30th. This coral reef is nearly a mile long and about a quarter of a mile wide, showing some 10 feet above the level of the sea. It is an important guide for making the route through Torres Straits, and a beacon was erected on it some thirty years ago. Stretching away from here in a north-west direction are the Great Barrier Reefs; which are probably the grandest and most extraordinary coralline structures existing in any part of the world. A turbulent sea is constantly rolling and causing a very heavy surf to break over the numberless islets and reefs