

and an *Astræa*, form huge masses, often as much as 5 feet in diameter, which have their bases attached to the bare basaltic rock of the shore. The tops of all of these coral masses are dead and flat and somewhat decayed; but on these dead tops fresh growth is taking place, showing that slight oscillations in the level of the shore of a foot at least have taken place recently. Such slight oscillations are to be expected at the base of an active volcano. The tops of the corals have been certainly killed by being left exposed above water, and the present growth is due to the corals being now again submerged. The fact that these corals are to be seen growing on the bare rock itself, and not on débris of older corals, shows that the coral growth is very recent. The Brain Coral grows in convex, mostly hemispherical, masses, the *Astræa* more in the form of vertically standing cylindrical masses, or masses which may be described as made up of a number of fused cylinders. The masses of the *Astræa* are usually higher than those of the *Mæandrina* by about a foot, because they are able to grow in shallower water, and they thus range also higher up on the beach. Many of the masses of this *Astræa* in the shallower water are left dry at each low tide, and appear to suffer no more in consequence than do the common sea anemones of our English coasts, which are so closely allied to them. There seem to be but few instances of species of Madreporarian corals which thus grow where they are exposed at low tide. The Brain Coral apparently cannot survive exposure, and hence the tops of its masses have been killed during the change of depth of the water at about a foot below the height at which those of the *Astræa* have perished. The common Mushroom Coral (*Fungia* sp.), so often to be seen as a chimney-piece ornament in England, is most extraordinarily abundant on the shore, at a depth of 1 or 2 feet at low water, and with it an allied larger, similarly free-growing Coral (*Herpetolitha limax*, Esch.). The Mushroom Corals cover the bottom in places in such large quantities that a cart-load of them might be picked up in a very short time; nowhere else were they seen so common during the voyage. A Reef Coral (*Physogyra aperta*) was found, which has been made the type of a new genus.¹

Many visits were paid to the nutmeg plantations. The nutmeg is the kernel of a fruit very like a peach in appearance, which makes an excellent sweetmeat when preserved in sugar. The owner of a plantation, a very wealthy Malay native of Banda, said that about one male tree to every fifty females was planted on the estate; he had a superstition that if a nutmeg seed were planted with its flatter side uppermost, it would be more likely to produce a male seedling. Formerly, before the Dutch Government renounced its monopoly of the growth of nutmegs in the Moluccas, the trees were strictly and most jealously confined to the island of Great Banda. The utmost care was taken that no seeds fit for germination should be carried away from the island, for fear of rival plantations being formed elsewhere; seeds were, however, often smuggled out. The Government destroyed the nutmeg trees on all the other islands of

¹ Queleh, *Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist.*, ser. 5, vol. xiii. p. 293, 1884.