

and lepers' hospital has been built there; consequently, observations could not be taken on it; this was regretted, as the Austrian frigate "Novara" obtained magnetic observations there in 1859.

The French have established a depôt of coals on Point Fareute and constructed a slight embankment on the eastern side of the point, and as the water is deep, vessels are enabled to haul close enough to the shore to allow a landing brow to be hauled on board. There are plenty of conveniences on shore to which hawsers or chains may be attached, but vessels must use their own anchors as off-fasts, and must keep a good strain on the off-cables, as the trade wind has a tendency to force them against the point.

The island of Eimeo is badly depicted on the Admiralty Chart (Sheet 1382). It is triangular in shape, the base to the northward, the apex to the southward, and has several small harbours inside the barrier reef encircling it, the principal of which are those of Taloo and Avootai. This island has also been surveyed by the French.

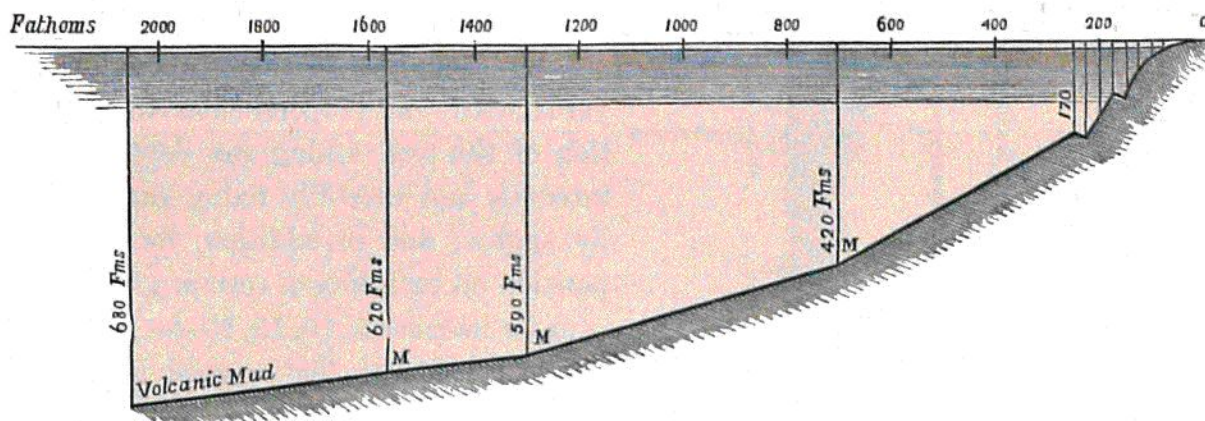


FIG. 269. — Slope of the outer face of the Barrier Reef at Tahiti, from the edge of the reef to two miles seawards.

Foreign vessels are not permitted to trade with any of the islands under the French protectorate, except Tahiti. The master of a British brigantine had some time before the Challenger's visit been imprisoned for twelve months for trading with the inhabitants of the Low Archipelago for pearl shells.

The mails to Tahiti are brought by a fast sailing schooner from San Francisco; there is no steam communication.

Supplies at Tahiti were, at the time of the Expedition's visit, scarce and high in price. Beef, which was brought from the Sandwich Islands, was 10d. per lb.; pork, 6½d. per lb.; sheep, which were occasionally brought from the Sandwich Islands or Easter Island, and which after the voyage weighed when killed and dressed only from 10 to 20 lbs., and were almost uneatable, cost 24s. each; fowls, 2s. 6d. each; and eggs, 2s. per dozen. Vegetables were plentiful and moderate in price; potatoes 16s. per bushel. Fruit was plentiful and cheap, but there was not much variety; the oranges were excellent.