

hard stone ; but if any part of it be detached at a spot where the tide reaches every day, it is found to be full of polypi of different lengths and colours ; some being as fine as a thread, of a bright yellow, and sometimes of a blue colour. The growth of coral appears to cease when the worm is no longer exposed to the washing of the sea. Thus a reef rises in the form of a cauliflower, till the top has gained the level of the highest tides, above which the animalcules have no power to advance, and the reef of course no longer extends upwards."

30. CORAL ISLANDS.—Kotzebue, Flinders, and MM. Quoi and Gaimard, have severally described the formation of coral islands ; the following is an abstract of their observations.

The coral banks are every where seen in different stages of progress : some are become islands, but not yet habitable ; others are above high-water mark, but destitute of vegetation ; while many are overflowed with every returning tide. When the polypi of the corals at the bottom of the ocean cease to live, their skeletons still adhere to each other, and the interstices being gradually filled up with sand and broken pieces of corals and shells, washed in by the sea, a mass of rock is at length formed. Future races of these animalcules spread out upon the rising bank, and in their turn die, increase and elevate this wonderful monument of their existence.

The reefs which raise themselves above the level