

Paumotu Archipelago there are about eighty of these atolls. Going westward, a little to the north of west, they are found to dot the ocean at irregular intervals; and at the Kingsmill or Gilbert Group, the Marshall Group, and the Carolines, comprise seventy-five or eighty atolls.

If a line be drawn from Pitcairn's Island, the southernmost of the Paumotus, by the Gambier Group, the north of the Society Group, the Navigators, and the Salomon Islands to the Pelews, it will form nearly a straight boundary, trending N. 70° W., running between the atolls on one side and the high islands of the Pacific on the other, the former lying to the north of the line, and the latter to the south.

Between this boundary line and the Hawaiian Islands, an area nearly two thousand miles wide and six thousand long, there are two hundred and four islands, of which *only three are high*, exclusive of the eight Marquesas, and the Ladrões, with Yap, Hunter's, and Los Matelotas in the line of the Ladrões and Pelews. These three are Kusaie or Ualan, Ponape, and Truk or Hogoleu, all in the Caroline Archipelago. South of the same line, within three degrees of it, there is an occasional atoll; but beyond this distance there are none, excepting the few in the Friendly Group and one or two in the Feejees.

If each coral island scattered over this wide area indicates the subsidence of an island, we may believe that the subsidence was general throughout the area. Moreover, each atoll, could we measure the thickness of the coral constituting it, would inform us nearly how much subsidence took place where it stands; for they are actually so many registers placed over the ocean, marking out, not only the sight of a buried island, but also the depth at which it lies covered. We have not the means of applying the evidence; but there are facts at hand which may give at least comparative results.

a. We observe, *first*, that the barrier reefs are, in general, evidence of less subsidence than atoll reefs (p. 229). Consequently, the great preponderance of the former just below the southern boundary line of the coral island area, and farther south the entire absence of atolls, while atolls prevail so