The Rev. John Williams states that there are seven or eight of large extent on the island. Into one he entered by a descent of twenty feet, and wandered a mile in one only of its branches without finding an end "to its interminable windings." He says, "Innumerable openings presented themselves on all sides as we passed along, many of which appeared to be equal in height, beauty, and extent to the one we were following. The roof, a stratum of coral rock fifteen feet thick, was supported by massy and superb stalactitic columns, besides being thickly hung with stalactites from an inch to many feet in length; some of these pendents were just ready to unite themselves to the floor, or to a stalagmitic column rising from it. Many chambers were passed through whose fretwork ceilings and columns of stalactites sparkled brilliantly, amid the darkness, with the reflected light of our torches. The effect was produced not so much by single objects, or groups of them, as by the amplitude, the depth, and the complications of this subterranean world."

Other similar caves exist on the neighbouring island of Mauke.

The Bermudas are also noted for their caverns. The coral-made land here stands in some places 260 feet above the sea. Lieutenant Nelson speaks of the caverns as large and beautiful —one of them "a perfect bijou."

These are examples of the comparatively rapid formation of caverns. The waters which run or percolate through them must be charged with carbonic acid to accomplish such work, and yet they have no source for this ingredient except the atmosphere, animal respiration, and vegetable and animal decomposition in the soil. The flutings and stalactitic incrustations of a precipice facing the sea must depend on the former alone, with the aid perhaps of the spray from the sea brought over the reef by storms.

XIII. OCEANIC TEMPERATURE.

Facts seem to indicate—though perhaps not sufficient to demonstrate—that the Gulf Stream has had, from the Jurassic