

On the 18th February a dredging was taken in 1525 fathoms, about 160 miles S.W. of Ferro Island (see Sheet 6, Station 3), which has proved to be one of the most curious during the whole cruise. Two soundings were taken at the same spot, giving 1520 and 1525 fathoms. The Hydra tube in both cases came up empty, but was marked on the outside with black streaks. The dredge was lowered at 10 A.M., with 2200 fathoms of line, and 2 cwt. of sinkers 300 fathoms from the dredge, and at 5.30 P.M. it was hauled up, and contained some large branches of an Aleyonarian Coral allied to *Corallium*.<sup>1</sup> Some of the larger branches were nearly an inch in diameter. The central portion of the axis was very compact and of a pure white colour, while the surface was glossy black. The bases of the Coral were attached to large fragments of what turned out to be portions of manganese-iron concretions, which appeared to have been torn away from still larger masses. The whole of the Coral was dead, and appeared to have been so for a long time, as its surface was everywhere covered by a deposit of peroxide of manganese. It is not improbable, however, that the Coral lived at the depth at which it was dredged, at the time the deposit of the manganese was going on, inasmuch as the flattened bases of the Coral were seen between the concentric layers of manganese nodules to which they were attached.

Attached to the branches of the Coral there was a magnificent specimen of a Hexactinellid sponge, allied to *Hyalonema*, which has been described by Professor C. Wyville Thomson under the name of *Poliopogon amadou*<sup>2</sup> (see p. 439). The basal portions of the sponge had some patches of Globigerina ooze attached to them, made up of pelagic Foraminifera, Pteropods, Heteropods, Coccoliths, Rhabdoliths, otoliths of Fish, fragments of Echinoderms, and a good many particles of volcanic minerals. An Ophiurid, portions of a *Brisinga*, several Annelids, several Polyzoa, and one or two Corals came up in the same dredge.

With the exception of a few stormy Petrels and an occasional Puffin, no birds approached the ship while making this passage of the Atlantic. This was in striking contrast with experiences in more northern and southern latitudes, where large numbers of sea birds usually followed in the wake of the ship. The tow-net was frequently used, but not so constantly or systematically as in the latter part of the cruise; and while the vessel was engaged in sounding and dredging operations, boats were frequently lowered to enable the Naturalists to pick up the animals on the surface of the sea, but life was not found so abundant in this trade wind region as during the voyage from Gibraltar to Madeira. Towards the western portion of the Atlantic, large masses of Gulf Weed were passed, and frequent excursions made to these patches in boats in order to examine the animals living upon them (see p. 136). Dead shells of *Spirula* were frequently

<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. O. Ridley of the British Museum, who has examined specimens of this Coral, believes that they belong to a species of *Pleurocorallium*, Gray, probably the white or cream-coloured species *Pleurocorallium johnsoni*, Gray, which occurs at Madeira.

<sup>2</sup> Voyage of the Challenger, The Atlantic, vol. i. p. 175, London, 1877.