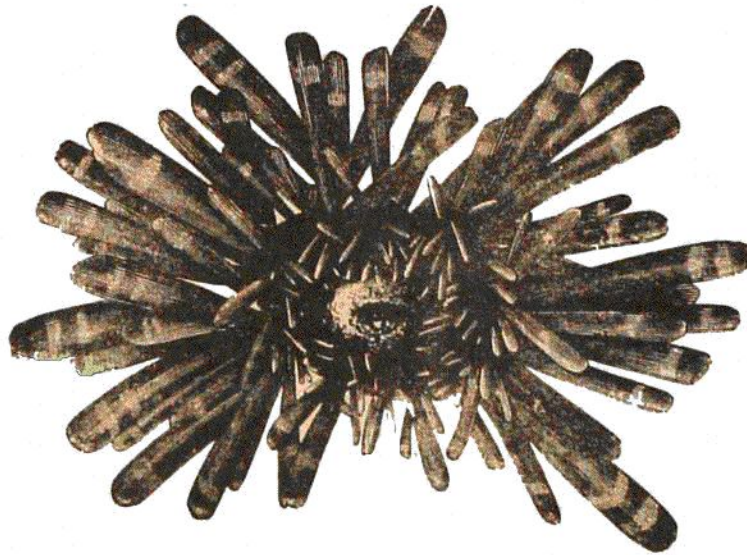


its surface is remarkably even, and but few stunted corals were growing upon it, but *Alcyonarians* were abundant, and the whole surface was covered with a crust of calcareous seaweeds (*Corallinaceæ*).

The water on the reef edge was usually not much more than ankle-deep, but the breakers sent from time to time so strong a current inwards across the barrier, that it was difficult to keep one's footing. On the reef were resting irregularly shaped masses of solid stony corals, portions of various *Astricidæ*, *Poritidæ*, or of reef rock, thrown up upon the marginal platform of the reef by the surf, and reminding one, as they rested in all sorts of positions, of the scattered rock fragments on a glacier. Sometimes they even rest on a narrowed support like "table-stones," having become first



ACROCLADIA MAMILLATA.

cemented to the platform, and subsequently gradually undercut by the waves. Dana has figured such table-stones. These thrown-up fragments are, as has been described, the only portions of the actual reef which are visible from a distance.

The chief differences between the fauna of the Fijian reefs and those of Bermuda, are the absence on the former of any large quantities of coral formed by *Milleporidæ* and large branching *Oculinidæ*, and the absence of the large flexible *Gorgonidæ*, which form so striking a feature at Bermuda. The great abundance of Madreporas forms the characteristic feature in the Fijian reefs. I saw, however, at Fiji, no Madreporas so large and fine in growth as those of St. Thomas.

On the reef-margin, by turning over the cast-up rock fragments, I found a few cowries, some huge *Trochi*, also specimens of *Turbo operculum*, and other shells. Various Holothurians and a large bright ultramarine-coloured Starfish (*Ophidiaster*),