

great depths. Our previous cruises had taught us what damage a rough bottom, especially coral, may do to the fishing tackle. Fig. 38 shows a piece of such coral brought up by the "Michael Sars" when fishing on the slope between the North Sea and

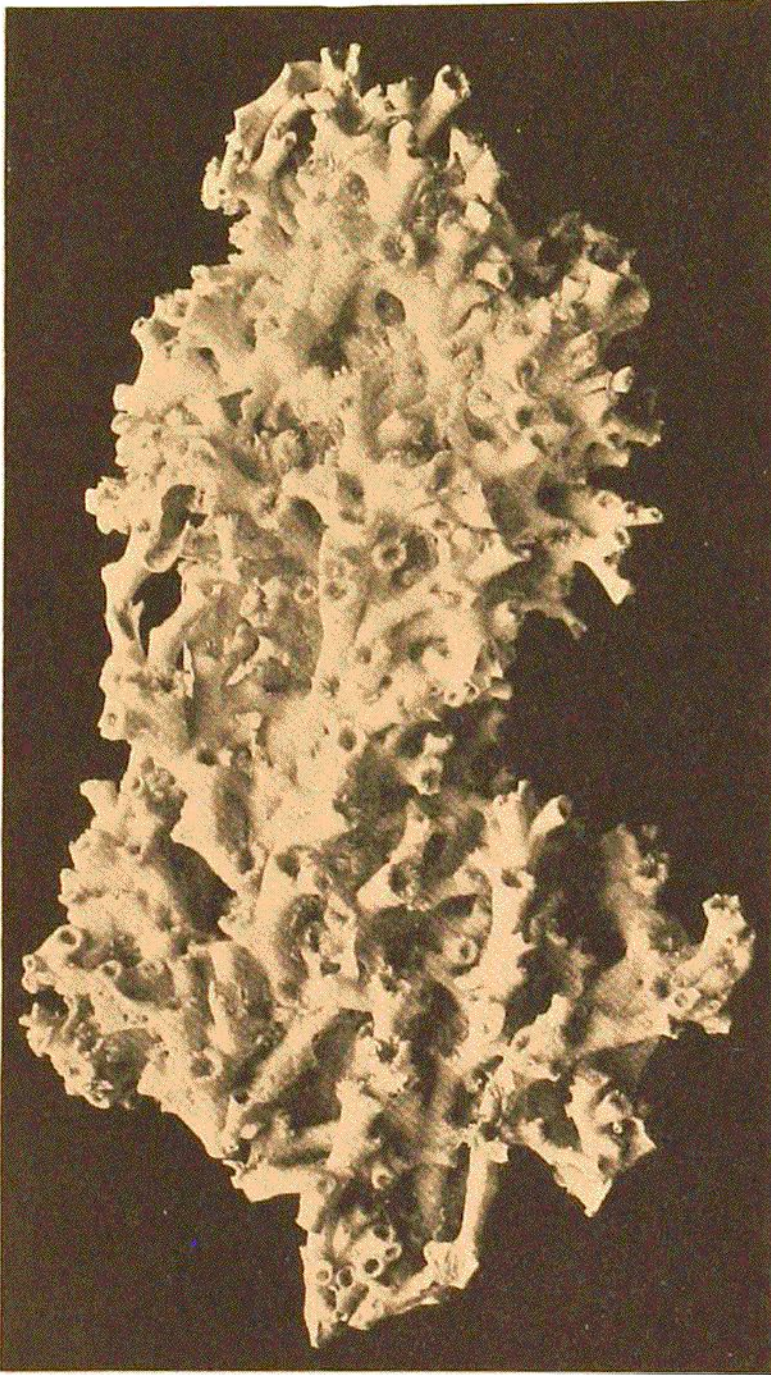


FIG. 38.—PIECE OF CORAL (*Lophohelia*).
About $\frac{1}{2}$ nat. size.

the deep water of the Norwegian Sea. To avoid the corals we followed the advice given us and took a westerly course when we left Plymouth on the 9th of April, and from the outermost westerly skerry, Bishop's Rock, we steered out over the coast banks to the continental slope. Everything was meanwhile got ready for trawling and for the hydrographical and plankton observations.

Before leaving the coast bank we made observations at our first three stations in depths of 146, 149, and 184 metres, partly to test the winches and instruments and partly to get a section of the waters on the bank. All our arrangements for

hydrographical and pelagic work were found satisfactory. We secured a number of samples, and thoroughly tested the appliances. It was particularly important to see if the closing nets were to be relied on, so we lowered them to a depth of 50 metres, and closed them immediately. They came up empty.