

all of them the water is brackish, and they are all more or less affected by the tide, though the rise and fall are almost imperceptible in those at a distance from the sea.

If a well be sunk in almost any part of the island, it is filled with water at once, but it is only the upper layer which is fresh. The water at the bottom of the well is brackish, and is affected by the tide; and the fresh water, which is merely the rain-catch of the surrounding ground, lies on its surface. As there is always a certain amount of mixture, the wells do not yield good drinking-water, and the people trust greatly to their rain-water tanks.

The direct evidences of subsidence are everywhere very palpable. The rocks exposed between tide-marks, and now being subjected to denudation, are not reef-rocks formed under water, but are, in most cases, stratified *Æolian* rocks.

The little pinnacle off the shore of Ireland Island, figured in the vignette at the end of this chapter, has its base composed of the ordinary blown sand of the sand-hills; the middle part is a shred of an old glaciis; and the top is again horizontally stratified sand which has been laid down unconformably on the cut edges of its laminae, after it had been greatly "denuded" by rain and wind. The North Rock has almost exactly the same structure, so that we can scarcely doubt that the dry land of Bermudas at one time occupied a space considerably larger than it does at present. Tradition and the accounts of some of the earlier voyagers would seem to corroborate this; but soft though the rocks may be, and rapid the changes which take place in them in a geological sense, it seems difficult to believe that after they were consolidated any great change could have taken place in their distribution in the short period during which they have been the subject of tradition. A very careful survey was made in the year 1843, and up to the period of our visit there did not seem to have been the least alteration, even in the depth and extent of the passages among the living reefs—a matter of jealous in-