

Science has much to tell us of the wonders of the ocean—its tides, currents, winds, inhabitants, depths, and uses in the economy of nature. The huge basin that contains the waters of the Atlantic, is a cleft, formed by the Almighty hand, in the surface of our planet, running from pole to pole, and of varying width and depth. Maury tells us that from the top of Chimborazo to the bottom of the Atlantic, in the deepest part yet reached by the plummet, the distance in a vertical line is nine miles. He also informs us that the deepest parts of the Atlantic, in the neighbourhood of the Bermudas, have been sounded to the depths of 34,000, 39,000, and even 50,000 feet, without reaching the bottom. If these soundings may be relied on, two such mountains as Mount Blanc, placed one on the other, would come far short of reaching the surface from those awful depths. By an ingeniously constructed apparatus, specimens of the bottom have been brought up from the depth of two miles. These specimens are found to consist wholly of microscopic shells—the remains of those minute creatures that inhabit the waters, and, after death, sink to the common graveyard at the bottom, there to become a portion of the materials that shall build up future islands and continents. In fact the depths beneath us, as we sail over the Atlantic, are as full of wonders and mysteries as the heavens above. From the broad bosom of ocean the sun is every instant raising countless millions of drops into the atmosphere. Unseen by human eye, these minute watery particles mount up into the blue ether, gather into silver clouds, float over the globe, and fall in refreshing rain or gentle dew, to feed the fainting rose, to clothe isles and continents in verdure, “to scatter plenty o’er a smiling land,” and then, laden with spoils, to return to the bosom of their great mother, the ocean. Thus from sea to air—from cloud to earth, and back to the grand reservoir the sea, circulates that moisture so essential to the life of the globe. Careering over the ocean, and looking down into their depths, we little suspect that the ocean conceals a most luxuriant vegetation of its own,—that it has its blooming gardens, waving forests, broad savannas, and varied landscapes, rivaling in splendour the gay magnificence of the vale of Sharon or the plain of Damascus; yet such is really the case. It is true only two kinds of algae or fucus are known to flourish in the bottom of the sea: but these present such countless varieties, differing in size and colour, that, near the shores of the shallower seas, they make the depths fairy gardens, in whose bowers the poetic imagination pictures sirens and mermaids disporting themselves. Very wonderful too is that vegetable growth we call seaweed, that floats about so slimy and dark. “waving its arms so lank and brown,” and struggling with the ocean that sends its roots, and carrying it hundreds of miles on its heaving bosom. Naturalists tell us that some kinds of this fucus cling, with handlike roots, so firmly to the rocky ground, that when the strong waves rend them, they often lift up gigantic masses of stone, and drag them, like huge anchors, as they are tossed on the billows. Vast portions of the ocean are covered with this vegetable growth. When the daring Columbus was on his first voyage, after he left the longitude of