

Here a fortnight was spent in scientific pursuits. The dredging around the reefs and the several deep-sea soundings taken in their neighbourhood prove Bermuda to be a solitary peak, rising abruptly from a base of only 120 miles in diameter. The botanists paid a good deal of attention to the flora of the island, for the charming walks through the avenues and forests were additional inducements to persevere in this study.

The most remarkable object of interest is undoubtedly the floating dock, one of the largest structures of its kind in the world, which was built in England, and was towed across the Atlantic, to its present position by five ships. Its length is three hundred and eighty-one feet, and its breadth one hundred and twenty-four feet. The largest and heaviest man-of-war can be docked. It is divided into forty-eight water-tight compartments, which are fitted with valves worked from the upper deck. By placing some four thousand tons of water in the upper chambers its keel can be brought five feet out of water and cleaned—a process which it has once undergone. You ascend a ladder or steps on the outside, and get a fine view.

We left Bermuda on the 21st April and shaped a north-westerly course so as to carry a line of soundings to Sandy Hook. The soundings taken in crossing and near the Gulf Stream were of very great interest. On each side the depths were found to be respectively 2,400 and 1,700 fathoms, grey ooze bottom; while in the Stream itself the line ran out over 2,600 fathoms without reaching the bottom. This sounding, however, was considered doubtful, there being a strong wind and current at the time dragging the line out of the perpendicular. The Stream was found to be about 60 miles broad, which was easily detected by the 8° difference of temperature on entering and leaving.

This influential current takes its rise in the Gulf of Mexico, though it might be regarded as a continuation of the equatorial current which flows from the western coast of Africa across the Atlantic, absorbing the sun's rays as it advances, and storing away the warmth for future use. It then passes into the Mexican Gulf, where its waters are raised to the high temperature of 86°, and sweeps through the pass of Florida, skirting the shores of North America, until it takes the remarkable curve off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland which throws its waters across the Atlantic, towards the coast of Europe. One branch curves downward, and flits past the Azores, the other