

latitudes is from sixteen to twenty degrees, and the north winds, which sometimes rage there very tempestuously, drive floating isles of seaweed into the low latitudes as far as the parallels of twenty-four and even twenty degrees. Vessels returning to Europe, either from Monte Video or the Cape of Good Hope, cross these banks of *Fucus*, which the Spanish pilots consider as at an equal distance from the Antilles and Canaries; and they serve the less instructed mariner to rectify his longitude. The second bank of *Fucus* is but little known; it occupies a much smaller space, in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth degrees of latitude, eighty leagues west of the meridian of the Bahama Islands. It is found on the passage from the Caiques to the Bermudas.

Though a species of seaweed* has been seen with stems eight hundred feet long, the growth of these marine cryptogamia being extremely rapid, it is nevertheless certain, that in the latitudes we have just described, the *Fuci*, far from being fixed to the bottom, float in separate masses on the surface of the water. In this state, the vegetation can scarcely last longer than it would in the branch of a tree torn from its trunk; and in order to explain how moving masses are found for ages in the same position, we must admit that they owe their origin to submarine rocks, which, lying at forty or sixty fathoms' depth, continually supply what has been carried away by the equinoctial currents. This current bears the tropic grape into the high latitudes, toward the coasts of Norway and France; and it is not the Gulf-stream, as some mariners think, which accumulates the *Fucus* to the south of the Azores.

The causes that unroot these weeds at depths where it is generally thought the sea is but slightly agitated, are not sufficiently known. We learn only, from the observations Spaniards call *mar de zargasso*. I have shown, in another place ("Views of Nature," Bohn's edition, p. 46), that the passage of Aristotle, *De Mirabil.* (ed. Duval, p. 1157), can scarcely be applied to the coasts of Africa, like an analogous passage of the Periplus of Scylax. Supposing that this sea, full of weeds, which impeded the course of the Phœnician vessels, was the *mar de zargasso*, we need not admit that the ancients navigated the Atlantic beyond thirty degrees of west longitude from the meridian of Paris.

* The *baudreux* of the Falkland Islands; *Fucus giganteus*, Forster; *Laminaria pyrifera* Lamour.