

CHAPTER II.

PASSAGE FROM MADEIRA TO RIO JANEIRO.

1838.

On the 25th of September, having completed all that was deemed necessary, we sailed from Madeira, and stood to the southward, intending to pass over the localities where shoals were supposed to exist.

The morning after our departure from Madeira it was reported to me at daylight that the squadron were not in sight; as we had been making rapid progress throughout the night, I concluded that we had outrun the squadron, and hove to for them to come up. About eight o'clock they were discovered. On joining, I was informed by Captain Hudson that they had been becalmed for several hours, although we were near each other when the breeze sprang up. These veins of wind are frequent in this part of the ocean.

After passing the Canary Islands we experienced a current setting northeast by east, of about one fourth of a mile an hour, until we reached the latitude of Bonavista, one of the Cape de Verde Islands. This somewhat surprised me, for I had formed the idea that the set of the current should have been in the direction of our course; but many careful observations with the current-log, and the difference between our astronomical observations and dead reckoning, gave the same results.

It was my intention on leaving the United States to pass from Madeira through the Sargasso Sea, in order to ascertain something definite in relation to this unexplored and interesting locality, and to gain some information relative to the *Fucus natans*, or Gulf-weed, the origin of which has remained so long in doubt. Deep soundings in this part of the ocean I deemed would be very interesting, and afford an