

rated before they reach the torrid zone. More to the north, in 28 and 35 degrees, between the parallels of Teneriffe and Ceuta, in 46 and 48 degrees of longitude, no constant motion is observed: there, a zone of 140 leagues in breadth separates the equinoctial current (the tendency of which is towards the west) from that great mass of water which runs eastward, and is distinguished for its extraordinary high temperature. To this mass of waters, known by the name of the Gulf-stream,* the attention of naturalists was directed in 1776 by the curious observations of Franklin and Sir Charles Blagden.

The equinoctial current drives the waters of the Atlantic towards the coasts inhabited by the Mosquito Indians, and towards the shores of Honduras. The New Continent, stretching from south to north, forms a sort of dyke to this current. The waters are carried at first north-west, and passing into the Gulf of Mexico through the strait formed by Cape Catoche and Cape St. Antonio, follow the bendings of the Mexican coast, from Vera Cruz to the mouth of the Rio del Norte, and thence to the mouths of the Mississippi, and the shoals west of the southern extremity of Florida. Having made this vast circuit west, north, east, and south, the current takes a new direction northward, and throws itself with impetuosity into the Gulf of Florida. At the end of the Gulf of Florida, in the parallel of Cape Cannaveral, the Gulf-stream, or current of Florida, runs north-east. Its rapidity resembles that of a torrent, and is sometimes five miles an hour. The pilot may judge, with some certainty, of the proximity of his approach to New York, Philadelphia, or Charlestown when he reaches the edge of the stream; for the elevated temperature of the waters, their saltness, indigo-blue colour, and the shoals of seaweed which cover their surface, as well as the heat of the surrounding atmosphere, all indicate the Gulf-stream. Its rapidity diminishes towards the north, at the same time that its breadth increases and the waters become cool. Between Cayo Biscaino and the bank of Bahama the breadth is only 15 leagues, whilst in the latitude of $28\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, it is 17, and in the parallel of Charlestown, opposite Cape Henlopen, from 40

* Sir Francis Drake observed this extraordinary movement of the waters, but he was unacquainted with their high temperature.