

the range of the Gulf Stream, and borne onward around the peninsula of Florida into the Atlantic. As is well known, the Gulf Stream in this region pursues a course from west to east, and, in passing the Florida Keys, it bends northward. At this flexure of the stream, the outer portion of the current must necessarily be more rapid than the inner, or that nearest the main land. The retardation of the inner belt gives more time for the deposition of its sediments, and we accordingly find a submarine bank of mud gradually raised. When the summit of this bank reaches to within about two hundred feet of the surface, the coral-builder plants his foundations upon it, and patiently rears his massive reef to the ocean's surface,

“Unconscious, not unworthy instrument
By which a hand invisible is rearing
A new creation in the secret deep.”

In the mean time the ocean stream is crowded farther toward the south, where the waters are deeper. Simultaneously the mud deposits extend southward, and upon these stretches southward also the “masonry imperishable” of the little coral architect. As with all coral reefs, those of Florida are gradually being covered with the materials of a soil, and clothed with a tropical vegetation. Thus the land at this point is continually extending itself. When we inquire for what length of time and over what distance this growth of the land has taken place, we find that half the peninsula of Florida is underlaid by a reef which is absolutely continuous with that now forming, and that the species of polyps which worked upon that foundation of a state were identical with those now laboring to extend the area of American freedom. It appears, therefore, that the same processes which have resulted in the formation of that peninsula are still extending it southward. The time can not be infinitely remote when the “ever blessed isle”