

shape of a rough rocky floor, without great inequalities; this formation obtains its greatest breadth, of about eighteen miles, a little to the east of Sombrero Light, and tapers off to the west, where it ends in about the same longitude as the end of the reef; toward the east and north it approaches nearer the reef, and ends gradually between Carysfort reef and Cape Florida. This bottom, which is called 'Pourtales Plateau' in Prof. Agassiz's report (see map), is very rich in deep-sea corals, the greatest number of those described in these pages [the memoir here cited from] having been dredged on this ground.

"Outside of the rocky bottom the *Globigerina* mud prevails and fills the trough of the channel.

"On the Cuba shore the bottom is rocky and the slope very abrupt, particularly for the first four or five hundred fathoms. Along the Salt Key and Bahama Banks, the slope is also exceedingly abrupt, but the underlying rock is often covered with mud."

Prof. Agassiz observes that the rocky bottom of the Pourtales Plateau is a true coral-rag—in other words, ordinary coral reef-rock—being made up of an agglomeration of fragments of corals and sand, cemented into a solid limestone.

*Bahama Islands.*—The Bahamas (the western margin of which is shown on the map of the Florida Reefs) are coral reefs and reef islands, essentially like atoll reefs. The northern end of the group lies opposite southern Florida, and from this point they stretch off to the west of south-west in a double series, nearly parallel to the trend of Cuba and San Domingo, and terminate properly in Turk's Island and some other reefs north of the latter,—the whole length above 600 miles. The 100-fathom line of soundings extends around the two northern ranges of reefs and islands, which, therefore, make up one bank, the Little Bahama Bank; and another similar line embraces the next six islands as parts of a second bank, called the Great Bahama Bank, whose whole length is about 300 miles. New Providence Island, the site of the seat of government of the group, Nassau, is the middle one of the three northern islands of this bank. The relation of