

Prof. Agassiz gives the following account of a part of these reefs in the first volume of the "Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy:"—

"The Bahamas and the reefs to the north-east of Cuba exhibit very abrupt slopes, and a great depth is reached close to the shores of the Banks, so that the Bahamas resemble the coral reefs of the Pacific much more than the reefs of the coast of Florida.

"The whole group of banks and keys embraced between Double-Headed Shot Key, Salt Key, and Anguilla Key (all on the Salt Key Bank) is a very instructive combination of the phenomena of building and destruction. The whole group is a flat bank covered by four or five, and occasionally six, fathoms of water, with fine sandy bottom, evidently corals reduced to oölitic, the grains, which are of various sizes, from fine powder to coarse sand, mingled with broken shells, among which a few living specimens are occasionally found. The margin of the Bank is encircled on several points by rocky ridges of the most diversified appearance, and at others edged by sand-dunes. A close examination and comparison of the different Keys show that these different formations are in fact linked together, and represent various stages of the accumulation, consolidation, and cementation of the same materials. On the flat top of the bank the loose materials are pounded down to fine sand; in course of time this sand is thrown up upon the shoalest portions of the Bank, and it is curious to notice that these shoalest parts are its very edge, along which corals have formed reefs which have become the basis of the dry Banks. The foundation rock, as far as tide, wind, and wave may carry the coarser materials, consist of a conglomeration of coarser oölitic grains, rounded fragments of corals, or broken shells, and even larger pieces of a variety of corals and conchs, all the species being those now found living upon the Bank, among which *Strombus gigas* is the most common besides that, *Astræ (Orbicella) annularis*, *Siderastræa siderea* and *Mæandrina mammosa* prevail. The shells of *Strombus* are so common that they give great solidity and hardness to the rock.