

tent, and such expanses are probably more frequent nearer the centre of its area of distribution.

They consist of a single layer of feathery bunches of the weed (*Sargassum bacciferum*), not matted, but floating nearly free of one another, only sufficiently entangled for the mass to keep together. Each tuft has a central brown thread-like branching stem studded with round air-vesicles on short stalks, most of those near the centre dead, and coated with a beautiful netted white polyzoon. After a time vesicles so incrusted break off, and where there is much gulf-weed the sea is studded with these little separate white balls. A short way from the centre, toward the ends of the branches, the serrated willow-like leaves of the plant begin; at first brown and rigid, but becoming farther on in the branch paler, more delicate, and more active in their vitality. The young fresh leaves and air-vesicles are usually ornamented with the stalked vases of a *Campanularia*. The general color of the mass of weed is thus olive in all its shades, but the golden olive of the young and growing branches greatly predominates. This color is, however, greatly broken up by the delicate branching of the weed, blotched with the vivid white of the incrusting polyzoon, and riddled by reflections from the bright-blue water gleaming through the spaces in the net-work. The general effect of a number of such fields and patches of weed, in abrupt and yet most harmonious contrast with the lanes of intense indigo which separate them, is very pleasing.

These floating islands have inhabitants peculiar to them, and I know of no more perfect example of protective resemblance than that which is shown in the gulf-weed fauna. Animals drifting about on the surface of the sea, with such scanty cover as the single broken layer of the sea-weed, must be exposed to exceptional danger from the sharp-eyed sea-birds hovering above them, and from the hungry fishes searching for prey beneath; but one and all of these creatures imitate in such an ex-