

CHAPTER VII

FISHES FROM THE SEA-BOTTOM

ZOOLOGISTS on both sides of the Atlantic have long been engaged in collecting facts regarding the occurrence of fishes and other organisms which inhabit the Northern Atlantic and adjacent waters. In recent times special expeditions have offered opportunities of collecting according to definite plans, and the American expeditions in the "Blake" and the "Albatross," and the European ones in the "Challenger," in the "Travailleur," the "Talisman," and the "Princesse Alice" have added essentially to our knowledge. As a consequence a very large amount of material has been accumulated, but as yet this material has not been utilised for the purpose of drawing up a general account of the distribution of the different animal-communities.

Any attempt to review our knowledge, or to summarise the voluminous literature on this subject, would extend this book beyond all reasonable limits, and I shall therefore restrict myself to certain important and characteristic main lines in the distribution of Atlantic fishes and other animals, relying principally on the captures made during the cruises of the "Michael Sars." The material gathered during these cruises is so large that a representative view may now be obtained, and while confining myself to our own observations I hope to give some information of real value. My aim, then, will be to describe the geographical distribution of the fishes, as this group has been made the special object of our researches; other groups of animals will be mentioned only in order to illustrate the surroundings and the animal-communities associated with the different fishes.

In dealing with animal geography one must always presuppose a knowledge of a vast number of animal forms. The animals inhabiting the depths of the sea are strange to all but