

lizations from a fluid state, and, seeing nothing more uniform or beautiful in the stony corals and corallines, he was naturally led to give an easy assent to that doctrine which taught that these were all the result of similar depositions. The new opinions might be true or not when restricted to the pliant horny corallines, (though he inclined to believe in their vegetable origin,) but it was unnecessary to call in the agency of animalcules to explain the formation of the hard stony kinds, which indeed seemed beyond the power of an almost gelatinous animalcule to excrete and laborate. Nor would he believe *these* to be sea-plants, but rather of a mineral nature and origin. “The rocks in the sea on which these corals are produced,” he says, “are undoubtedly replete with mineral salts, some whereof near their surface, being dissolved by the sea-water, must consequently saturate with their saline particles the water round them to a small distance, where blending with the stony matter with which sea-water always abounds, little masses will be constituted here and there and affixed to the rocks. Such adhering masses may be termed *roots* : which roots attracting the saline and stony particles, according to certain laws in nature, may produce branched or other figures, and increase gradually by an apposition of particles ; becoming thicker near the bottom where the saline matter is more abounding, but tapering or diminishing toward the extremities, where the mineral salts must be fewer, in proportion to their distance from the rock whence they originally proceed. And the different proportions of mineral saline particles, of the stony or other matter wherewith they are blended, and of marine salt, which must have a considerable share in such formations, may occasion all the variety we see. Nor does it seem more difficult to imagine that the radiated, starry, or cellular figures along the sides of these corals, or at the extremities of their branches, may derive their production from salts incorporated with stony matter, than that the curious delineations and appearances of minute shrubs and mosses on slates, stones, &c. are owing to the shootings of salts intermixt with mineral particles : and yet these are generally allowed to be the work of mineral steams or exhalations ; by which must, I think, be meant the finest particles of some metal or mineral incorporated with and brought into action by a volatile penetrating