

on paper: and it was this amusement that directed his enquiries into the nature of the latter, for, attracted by their beauty and neatness, he was induced to examine them minutely with the microscope, by the aid of which he immediately perceived "that they differed not less from each other, in respect to their form, than they did in regard to their texture; and that, in many of them, this texture was such, as seemed to indicate their being more of an animal, than vegetable nature." These "suspicions," as he modestly terms them, were communicated to the Royal Society in June 1752; and, encouraged by some of the members, he prosecuted this enquiry with such ardour, and care, and sagacity, that in August of the same year, he had fully convinced himself "that these apparent plants were ramified animals, in their proper skins or cases, not locomotive, but fixed to shells of oysters, mussels, &c. and to *Fucus*'s."\*

Ellis, however, was not forward to publish his discovery: he waited further opportunities to confirm the accuracy of his first observations, and to institute other experiments to remove whatever appeared hostile to the doctrine, which at length he fully explained to the members of the Royal Society in a paper read before them in June 1754: and it was made more generally known in the following year by the publication of his "Essay towards a natural history of the Corallines, and other marine productions of the like kind, commonly found on the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland;"—a work so complete and accurate that it remains an unscarred monument of his well-earned re-

\* See the Introduction to his Essay on the Corallines of Great Britain. It is from this work, and from the valuable "Selection of the Correspondence of Linnæus, and other naturalists, from the original manuscripts, by Sir James Edward Smith," 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1821, that I derive my account of Ellis's opinions. Sir J. E. Smith commences his memoir by saying—"John Ellis, F. R. S., illustrious for his *discovery* and complete demonstration of the animal nature of Corals and Corallines, was a native of Ireland." We have seen that he has no claim to this discovery, though he himself seems to have thought so, and never makes mention of his predecessors in the same field. A Professor Buttner at Gottingen, who had been in England, and become acquainted with Ellis, who calls him an "excellent botanist," unhesitatingly claimed Ellis's discoveries for his own, but a more bare-faced literary theft has not been recorded, and its detection has rendered the name of the German Professor infamous.—Lin. Corresp. Vol. i. p. 170 and 179,—For a list of Ellis's writings the reader may consult Hall. Bib. Bot. ii. 433, and the Introd. to Soland. Zooph. p. viii.