

# ZOOPHYTA BRITANNICA.

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## ORDER I.

### Z. HYDROIDA.

#### CHARACTER.

*Polypes compound, rarely single and naked, the mouth encircled with roughish filiform tentacula; stomach without proper parietes; intestine 0; anus 0; reproductive gemmules pullulating from the body and naked, or contained in external vesicles.—Polypidoms horny, fistular, more or less phytoidal, fixed, external.*

#### OBSERVATIONS.

“As for your pretty little seed-cups or vases, they are a sweet confirmation of the pleasure Nature seems to take in superadding an elegance of form to most of her works, wherever you find them. How poor and bungling are all the imitations of art! When I have the pleasure of seeing you next, we will sit down, nay kneel down if you will, and admire these things.”\* Thus did Hogarth—our great moral painter—write to Ellis in evident reference to the zoophytes of the present order; and he must indeed be more than ordinarily dull and insensate who can examine them without catching some of the enthusiasm of the artist. They excel all other zoophytical productions in delicacy and the graceful arrangement of their forms, some borrowing the character of the prettiest marine plants, others assuming the semblance of the ostrich-plume, while the variety and elegance exhibited in the figures and sculpture of their miniature cups and chalices is only limited by the number of their species.

The Hydroida vary from a few lines to upwards of a foot in

\* Lin. Corresp. Vol. ii. p. 44.