

ZOOPHYTA BRITANNICA.

ORDER III.

Z. HELIANTHOIDA.

CHARACTER.

Polypes separate or compound, free or attached, flosculous; the body regular with a circular periphery, contractile, internally divided into numerous spaces by perpendicular muscular septa: mouth superior and central, encircled with one or more series of tubular tentacula: stomach membranous: anus 0: ovaries and cæca placed in the septa between the stomach and skin.

OBSERVATIONS.

I borrow the name of this order from Latreille, * but give to it a wider application than it has in the classification of that illustrious naturalist, that it may embrace the madrepores and starred stones, which the observations of Le Sueur, confirmed as they have been by subsequent voyagers, demonstrate to be the products of zoophytes similar, in all essential points, to the naked Actiniæ. The order thus corresponds to the class "Zoantha" of De Blainville,—a name which has the claim of priority, and might have been adopted by me, had not its conjunction with zoophyta appeared inappropriate, as involving a tautology. The term preferred expresses the resemblance which the animals it designates have to the compound or syngenesious flowers,—a resemblance which has been very generally remarked, and the source of the name—*Sea Anemonies*—by which the typical species are known in this country. When speaking of these Ellis says,—“their tentacles, being disposed in regular circles, and tinged with a variety of bright lively colours, very nearly represent the beautiful petals of some of our most

* Fam. du Regne Animal, p. 535.