

our northern shores, when they are big with numerous eggs. But in the Actiniæ, ova in every state of developement may be seen in the same individual throughout the year ; perhaps, however, they are most abundantly laid in autumn. They are usually of a roundish figure, and, like the gemmules of polypes in general, contractile and motive, being carried about from the action of the cilia that clothe the surface. " Under the microscope they prove of diversified form, many resembling flattened pease, some elongated or exhibiting irregular prominences, some almost spherical, others as if composed of two or even of three unequal spheres, and some which cannot be referred to any particular figure." After moving about for several days, during which their forms suffer some slight change, they insensibly relax in their activity, the cilia disappear, and, having become stationary, each rapidly runs through the stages of developement that lead it up to the similitude of its parent.

Every one has read of the coral islands of tropical seas ; how they grow from the fathomless profound, and how they rise to day by the operations of puny insects, which, in countless numbers, and in untold generations, effectuate changes on our globe superior, perhaps, to what all other animals united do, and compared to which the greatest achievements of " intellectual man," sink to insignificance.\* Geology teaches us that with these worms the great work of creation began ; and from that uncer-

\* " Their plants are made of stone, and they build dwellings. Dwellings ;— they construct islands and continents for the habitation of man. The labours of a worm, which man can barely see, form mountains like the Apennines, and regions to which Britain is as nothing. The invisible, insensible toil, of an ephemeral point, conspiring with others in one great design, working unseen, unheard, but for ever guided by one volition, by that One Volition which cannot err, converts the liquid water into the solid rock, the deep ocean into dry land, and extends the dominions of man, who sees it not and knows it not, over regions which even his ships had scarcely traversed. This is the Great Pacific Ocean ; destined, at some future day, to be a world. That same power which has thus wrought by means which blind man would have despised as inadequate, by means which he has but just discovered, here too shows the versatility, the contrast of its resources. In one hour it lets loose the raging engines, not of its wrath, but of its benevolence ; and the volcano and the earthquake lift up to the clouds, the prop and foundation of new worlds, that from those clouds they may draw down the sources of the river, the waters of fertility and plenty." *Dr Macculloch, Highlands and West. Islands, Vol. iv. p. 14.*