

and although from the extreme minuteness of the structure nerves cannot be detected, yet there can be no doubt that the animal possesses a nervous, and also a circulatory system for effecting nutrition and reparation. We find also that when the flustra is removed from the element in which it lived, the substance of which it is composed, like the flesh of the larger animals, undergoes putrefaction—in other words, that the creature dies—it has lost the vital principle by which it previously resisted chemical agency, and now submits to the effects of those laws which act upon inorganic matter; the calcareous substance that formed its support or skeleton, and which like the bones of mammiferous animals, was secreted by the fleshy mass, alone remains.

13. CORALS, OR SKELETONS OF ZOOPHYTES.—I would here particularly remark, that the stony matter or support of all zoophytes is formed by a similar process; the substances called corals being secretions from an animal substance by which they were permeated and invested, in like manner as the bones and nails in man are secreted by the tissues or membranes designed for that purpose, and acting without his knowledge or control. Nothing can be more erroneous than the common notion that the cells in the larger corals are built up by the polypi which are found in them, in the same manner as are the cells of wax by the bee or the wasp.