

floating in the agitated medium ; while others form immoveable rocks, which increase slowly but surely, till they become elevated above the surface of the waters, and constitute islands, as I shall hereafter describe.

The peculiarities in the distribution of these animals are not confined to the relative depths of the waters ; like plants, they vary with the climate, and in cold latitudes the cellariæ and sertulariæ, with a few sponges and alcyonia, are alone to be met with. As we proceed to the 44th or 45th degree of northern latitude, their number increases, and gorgoniæ, sponges with loose tissue, and millepores with foliated and fragile expansions, appear in profusion. A little farther, and the coral reddens the depths of the ocean with its brilliant branches, and is soon followed by the large madrepores.* It is not, however, before the 34th degree of northern latitude that the corals become developed to the grandeur and importance which they afterwards attain, to the extent of a parallel southern latitude. It is therefore within the tropics, in a zone of more than 60 degrees expansion, that these beings, scarcely visible to the naked eye, exercise their empire in a medium whose temperature knows no change. From the depths of the ocean they elevate those immense reefs that may hereafter form a communication between the inhabitants of the

* Lamouroux.