

some parts of the sea the eye perceives nothing but a bright sandy plain at bottom, extending for many hundred miles; but in the Red Sea, the whole bed of this extensive basin of water is absolutely a forest of submarine plants and corals. Here are sponges, gorgoniæ, madrepores, fungiaë, and other polyparia, with fuci, algæ, and all the variety of marine vegetation, covering every part of the bottom, and presenting the appearance of a submarine garden of the most exquisite verdure, enamelled with animal forms, resembling, and even surpassing in splendid and gorgeous colouring, the most celebrated parterres of the East.

Ehrenberg, the distinguished German naturalist, whose labours have so greatly advanced our knowledge of the infusoria, was so struck with the magnificent spectacle presented by the living corals in the Red Sea, that he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "where is the paradise of flowers that can rival in variety and beauty these living wonders of the ocean?" Some have compared the appearance to beds of tulips or dahlias; and, in truth, the large fungiaë, with their crimson disks, and purple and yellow tentacula, bear no slight resemblance to the latter.

Instead of one lecture, many would be required fully to elucidate the natural history of the polyparia, so numerous and varied in appearance and structure are the modifications of this class of animal existence.