

38. CORALLINE MARBLES.—A reddish marble, beautifully marked by the sections of the inclosed tubipores, and susceptible of a good polish, is quarried in some parts of Derbyshire (Tab. 112, fig. 2).

Mr. Parkinson has ascertained that the hue of this marble is dependent on the original colour of the coral, which, like the recent tubipore (page 540), was probably of a rich scarlet.

I have mentioned (page 530), that the earthy matter of the recent corals, like the phosphate of lime in the bones of animals, is formed by secretion from a membraneous structure, and that the lime may be removed by a chemical process, and the membrane rendered manifest. Few, however, will be prepared to learn, that even in corals, which have been entombed in the solid rock for innumerable ages, the animal tissue can be detected. To my late friend, Mr. Parkinson, we are indebted for the knowledge of this interesting fact. He immersed a piece of tubiporitic marble (Tab. 112, fig. 2) in diluted muriatic acid, which has the property of dissolving calcareous earth, but cannot affect animal matter: to employ his own words, “As the calcareous earth dissolved, and the carbonic acid gas escaped, I was delighted to observe the membraneous substance depending from the marble in light flocculi, of a deep red colour; and although not retaining the tubular form of the original coral, yet appearing in a beautiful and distinct manner.”