

Several of the minute chalk corals will be figured and described in the next chapter. But one of the most unexpected results of M. Ehrenberg's labours, is, that numerous shells, corals, and infusoria, found in the most ancient cretaceous deposits, are identical with existing species. In sea-water, from Cuxhaven and other places, he has detected twenty-one genera and forty species, which he considers as differing in no respect from fossils that occur in the chalk.

NUMMULITE ROCK.—A large species of foraminiferous polythalamia, is well known by the name of *Nummulites* (fossil-money), from bearing some resemblance in form to a coin. These fossils are of a flat discoidal form, (see *Wond.* p. 234. *Ly.* I. 410.), slightly convex, and smooth externally; upon splitting them transversely, or rubbing them down, numerous cells or chambers are exposed, arranged in a discoidal spire, and on the same plane. In some of the tertiary strata they are very abundant, and still more so in the chalk of the southern parts of Europe, and in Asia and Africa. The cretaceous formation at Bayonne, and of the Pyrenees, consists of beds of compact crystalline marble composed of nummulites.\* The limestone of which the great pyramid of Egypt is in part constructed, is an aggregation of nummulites, and microscopic animalculites, that serve as a cement to the larger

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\* *Ly.* I. p. 410.