

were last here. The vacant spaces are not filling up with private houses, according to the original plan, so that the would-be metropolis wears still the air of some projector's scheme which has failed. The principal hotels, however, have improved, and we were not annoyed, as when last here, by the odors left in the room by the colored domestics, who had no beds, but slept anywhere about the stairs or passages, without changing their clothes. With similar habits, in a hot climate, no servants of any race, whether free or slave, African or European, would be endurable.

In the public museum at the Patent Office I was glad to see a fine collection of objects of natural history, brought here by the late Exploring Expedition, commanded by Captain Wilkes. Among other treasures is a splendid series of recent corals, a good description of which, illustrated by plates, will soon be published by Mr. Dana, at the expense of Government. These zoophytes are accompanied by masses of solid limestone, occasionally including shells, recently formed in coral reefs, like those mentioned by Mr. Darwin as occurring in the South Seas, some as hard as marble, others consisting of conglomerates of pebbles and calcareous sand. In several of the specimens I saw the imbedded zoophytes and shells projecting from the weathered surface, as do the petrifications in many an ancient limestone where they have resisted disintegration more than the matrix. Other fragments were as white and soft as chalk; one in particular, a cubic foot in bulk, brought from one of the Sandwich Islands, might have been mistaken for a piece of Shakspeare's Cliff, near Dover. It reminded me that an English friend, a professor of political economy, met me about fifteen years ago on the beach at Dover, after he had just read my "Principles of Geology," and exclaimed, "Show me masses of pure white rock, like the substance of these cliffs, in the act of growing in the ocean over areas as large as France or England, and I will believe all your theory of modern causes." Since that time we have obtained data for inferring that the growth of corals, and the deposition of chalk-like calcareous mud, is actually going on over much wider areas than the whole of Europe, so that I am now entitled to claim my incredulous friend as a proselyte.