

Beginning with the plants, let us, however, remark, that they do not precede in the order of their appearance the humbler animals. No more ancient organism than the *Oldhamia* of the Lowest Irish Silurians, a plant-like zoophyte somewhat resembling our modern sertularia, has yet been detected by

Fig. 5.



OLDHAMIA ANTIQUA ;—the oldest known Zoophyte.
Wrae Head, Ireland.

the geologist ; though only a few months ago the researches of Mr Salter in the ancient rocks of the Longmynd, Shropshire, previously deemed unfossiliferous, have given to it what seem to be contemporary vegetable organisms, in a few ill-preserved fucoids. So far as is yet known, plants and animals appear together. The long upward march of the animal kingdom takes its departure at its starting-point from a thick forest of algæ. In Bohemia, in Norway, in Sweden, in the British Islands, in North America, wherever, in fine, what appears to be the lowest, or at least one of the lowest, zones of life has yet been detected, the rocks are found to be darkened by the remains of algæ, so abundantly developed in some cases, that they compose, as in the ancient Lower Silurians of Dumfriesshire, impure beds of anthracite several feet in thickness. Apparently from the original looseness of their texture, the individual plants are but indifferently preserved ; nor can we expect that organisms so ancient should exhibit any *very* close resemblance to the plants which darken the