

pary, which is covered by a thin gelatinous substance, on the surface of which are scattered tentacula, corresponding with the stars on the surface of the coral, (see Pl. 54. Fig. 5).

Le Sueur, who observed them in the West Indies, describes these Polypes, when expanded in calm weather at the bottom of the sea, as covering their stony receptacles with a continuous sheet of most brilliant colours.

The gelatinous bodies of these Polypes are furnished with the power of secreting carbonate of Lime, with which they form a basis of attachment, and cell of retreat. These calcareous cells not only endure beyond the life of the Polypes that secreted them, but approach so nearly to Limestone in their chemical composition, that at the death of the Polype they remain permanently attached to the bottom. Thus one generation establishes the basis whereon the next fixes its habitation, which is destined to form the foundation of a further and continual succession of similar constructions, until the mass, being at length raised to the surface of the sea, a limit is thereby put to its further accumulation.

The tendency of Polypes to multiply in the waters of warm climates is so great, that the bottom of our tropical seas swarms with countless myriads of these little creatures, ever actively engaged in constructing their small but enduring habitations. Almost every submarine rock, and submarine volcanic cone, and ridge, within these