

latitudes, has become the nucleus and foundation of a colony of Polypes, chiefly belonging to the genera *Madrepora*, *Astrea*, *Caryophyllia*, *Meandrina*, and *Millepora*. The calcareous secretions of these Polypes are accumulated into enormous banks or reefs of coral, sometimes extending to a length of many hundred miles; these continually rising to the surface in spots where they were unknown before, endanger the navigation of many parts of the tropical seas.*

If we look to the office these Polypes perform in the present economy of nature, we find them acting as scavengers of the lowest class, perpetually employed in cleansing the waters of the sea from the impurities which escape even the smaller Crustacea; in the same manner as the Insect Tribes, in their various stages, are destined to find their food by devouring impurities caused by dead animal and vegetable matter upon the land.†

* Interesting accounts of the extent and mode of formation of these Coral Reefs may be found in the voyages of Peron, Flinders, Kotzebue, and Beechy; and an admirable application of the facts connected with modern Corals to the illustration of geological phenomena has been made by Dr. Kidd in his *Geological Essay*, and by Mr. Lyell, in his *Principles of Geology*, 3rd edit. vol. iii.

† Mr. De la Beche observed that the Polypes of the *Caryophyllia Smithii* (Pl. 54, Figs. 9, 10, 11,) devoured portions of the flesh of fishes, and also small Crustacea, with which he fed several individuals at Torquay, seizing them with their tentacula, and digesting them within the central sac which forms their stomach.