

of the last conclusions at which we arrive, is a conviction that the greatest and most important operations of nature are conducted by the agency of atoms too minute to be either perceptible by the human eye, or comprehensible by the human understanding.

We cannot better conclude this brief outline of the history of fossil Polyparies, extending as they do, from the most early transition rocks to the present seas, than in the words with which

These most curious observations throw important light on the obscure and long-disputed question of equivocal generation; the well-known fact that animalcules of definite characters appear in infusions of vegetable and animal matter, even when prepared with distilled water, receives a probable explanation, and the case of Infusoria no longer appears to differ from that of other animals as to the principle on which their propagation is conducted. The chief peculiarity seems to consist in this, that their increase takes place both by the oviparous and viviparous manner of descent from parent animals, and also by division of the bodies of individuals.

The great difficulty is, to explain the manner in which the eggs or bodies of preceding individuals can find access to each particular infusion. This explanation is facilitated by the analogous cases of various fungi which start into life, without any *apparent* cause, wherever decaying vegetable matter is exposed to certain conditions of temperature, humidity, and medium. Fries explains the sudden production of these plants, by supposing the light and almost invisible sporules of preceding plants, of which he has counted above 10,000,000 in a single individual, to be continually floating in the air, and falling every where. The greater part of these never germinate, from not falling on a proper matrix; those which find such matrix start rapidly into life, and begin to propagate.

A similar explanation seems applicable to the case of Infusoria; the extreme minuteness of the eggs and bodies of these animal-