

separated from the parent body, but forms a part of a many-headed and many-mouthed monster, which, at every oral orifice, is collecting the means of still increasing its coral palace, and thus it goes on till it has formed a habitation, not for itself, but, as I said, for man, in the midst of the world of waters.

One of their most celebrated historians, Lamouroux, thus expresses himself upon this part of their history. "Some, by their union or aggregation, form a long narrow ridge or reef, which extends uninterruptedly several degrees, opposing an immovable rampart to the great currents of the sea, which it often traverses, the solidity and magnitude of which increases daily. Sometimes this line of madreporic rocks assumes a circular form; the polypes that inhabit it gradually elevate their rocky dwelling to the surface of the sea, working then in a sheltered basin, they by little and little fill up its voids, taking the precaution, however, to leave in the upper part of this impenetrable wall openings by which the water can enter and retire, so as to renew itself, and furnish them with a constant supply of their aliment, and of the material with which they erect their habitation."

They do not always elevate their polyparies from the depths of the waters to their surface, some extend themselves horizontally upon the bottom of the sea, following its curvatures, declivities, and anfractuosities, and cover the soil of old ocean with an enamelled carpet of various and brilliant colours, sometimes of a single colour as dazzling as the purple of the ancients. Many of these beings are like a tree which winter has stripped of its leaves, but which the spring adorns with new flowers, and they strike the beholder by the eclat of petal-like animals, with which their branches are covered from the base to the extremity.

Captain Beechy has given a most interesting account of