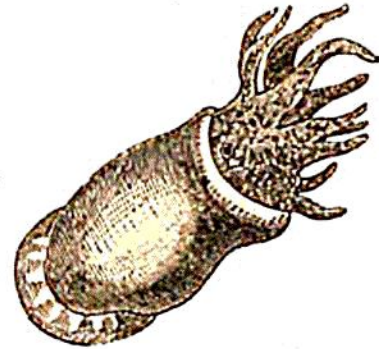


nal form of their conchs give them no small resemblance to a genus of snails,\* the species of which are often found in fresh waters, except that in this the shell is more concave on one side than the other. The genus *Spirula*, the animal of which appears also to be a Cephalopod, seems to exhibit the first tendency to this form.

Fig. 49.

*Spirula australis.*

Amidst all this variety of Molluscous animals, exhibiting such diversity in their structure and organization, in their habits, food, modes of life, and stations, one great object seems attained by their creation especially, the production of calcareous matter. Even the shells of terrestrial testaceans, if we consider the vast numbers that every year perish, must add in no trifling degree to the quantity of that matter on the earth, and probably make up for the continual waste or employment of it, so as to maintain the necessary equilibrium; but in the ocean, the quantity added to that produced by corallines must be exceedingly great, even in lakes beds are formed of the deposits of the shellfish inhabiting them, how much more gigantic must they be in the ocean; this will be evident from the superior number and size of the oceanic shells compared with the minute species, the *Limnea*, *Planorbis*, &c., that inhabit our lakes and pools. Thus, as reefs and islands are formed by the coral animals, the bed of the ocean may be elevated by the shells of dead testaceous ones. That eye which is never closed, that thought which is never intermitted, that power which never rests, but, engaged in incessant action, and employing infinite hosts of under-agents to effect his purposes, sees and provides for the wants of the whole creation: the plant absorbs from the soil, the animal after devouring

\* *Planorbis*.