

Mr. Mantell in the eleventh volume of the Linnæan Transactions, p. 401, under the name of *Alcyonium chonoides* (from *Χωνν*, a funnel); and as, from the limited circulation of the original work, the description (which is highly interesting) is probably known to very few of our readers, we shall subjoin an abridgement.

This alcyonium is, as to its general form, funnel-shaped and fixed by the root; the external coat is composed of fasciculi of muscular fibres, which, arising from the pedicle, proceed in a radiating manner towards the circumference, and by frequently anastomosing, constitute a retiform plexus capable of dilating, lengthening, and contracting; according to the impressing it received from this contractile power, arises a great variety in the general form of the specimens: when quiescent, it appears to have been funnel-shaped; when partly expanded, cyathiform; when completely so, discoidal; occasionally even throwing the surface into deeply undulated folds, so that a transverse section of it exhibits an indented outline, something like that of the heraldic nebule; these fasciculi are further connected by lateral processes, which increase the firmness of the integument formed by them; from the inner part of this envelopement, arise tubuli which pass direct to the inter-funnel-shaped cavity, and terminate on its surface in small circular pores or openings, often disposed in a quincuncial order; in some specimens, a substance of a sponge-like appearance fills up the interstices between these pores, probably the remains of a spongy membrane which in the recent specimen served to connect the tubes, and give consistence to the whole mass. Each of these pores was perhaps the cell of a minute polypus.

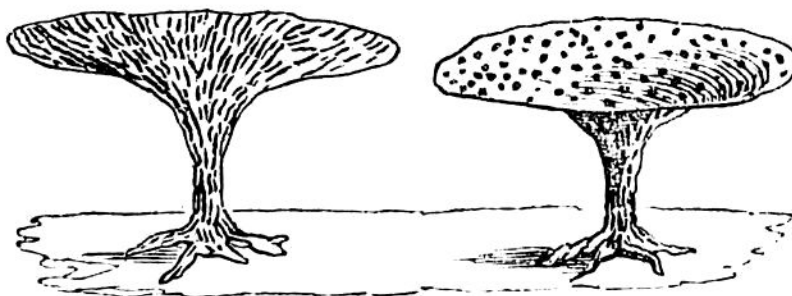


Fig. 1. Exterior view.

Fig. 2. View looking into the inner cavity.

Specimens are sometimes found invested with chalk only, but more usually enveloped in flinty nodules; Parkinson (pl. 10, fig. 14, 15, 16,) has given a representation of the root and part of the stem in this state, but the specimens were too imperfect