

well-known examples of the usual varieties of silex.*

I scarcely need observe, that this nodule of flint, obtained from a neighbouring chalk quarry, has once been in a soft or fluid state; for here we perceive impressions of shells, and of the spines of an echinus deeply imprinted on its surface.† We have already seen that water impregnated with carbonic acid gas is capable of holding lime in solution; and that travertine, limestone, and other calcareous deposits, have originated from this agency; and although, even in the present advanced state of chemical knowledge, we are unacquainted with the

* Here I would digress for a few moments, to notice an opinion which is so generally prevalent, that I may be permitted to assume, that even some of my readers may not be prepared at once to answer the question,—*Do stones grow?* The farmer who annually ploughs the same land, and every year observes a fresh CROP of stones, would probably answer in the affirmative; and the general observer, who had for successive years noticed his gardens and plantations strewed with stones, notwithstanding their almost daily removal, might entertain the same opinion. A moment's reflection, however, will serve to show, that it is impossible stones can be said to grow, in the proper acceptation of the term. Organic bodies grow, because they are provided with vessels by which they are capable of taking up and assimilating particles of matter, and converting them into their own substance; but an inorganic body can only increase in bulk by the addition of extraneous matter to its outer surface; hence stones may be incrustated, or they may become conglomerated together, but they cannot grow.

† *Vide* "Thoughts on a Pebble; or, a First Lesson in Geology." Fifth edition; 1837.