

In the flints, the substance of the Ventriculite is very generally as translucent as that of the Choanite, and distinguishable from the surrounding silex by a purple, reddish brown, or pale-grey colour; but towards the base and margin it is more or less calcareous; and in many examples the whole, or a large portion of the polyparium, is in that state. But this fact does not invalidate the inference that the original was flexible; for, like the Sponges, it may have been partially imbued with the fluid chalk before its envelopment in flint.\* The chalk specimens are commonly as friable as the surrounding stone, from which they are only distinguishable by their ochreous or ferruginous colour.

The constant presence of a ferruginous stain throughout the tissue of the chalk Ventriculites, and other flexible zoophytes, while the surrounding stone is of a pure white, can only be explained by the chemical changes to which the decomposition of animal matter would under such circumstances give rise. If sulphuretted hydrogen were evolved from the putrifying zoophytes imbedded in calcareous

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it (fig. 16), is the base of the stem of a Ventriculite, and the three or four orifices on the top have been produced by the transit of the radicle processes; the fossil is drawn in an inverted position; a very common error before the true origin of these flints was ascertained.

\* A piece of sponge dipped in liquid plaster of Paris, and afterwards enclosed in a transparent substance, as glass, would present such an appearance.