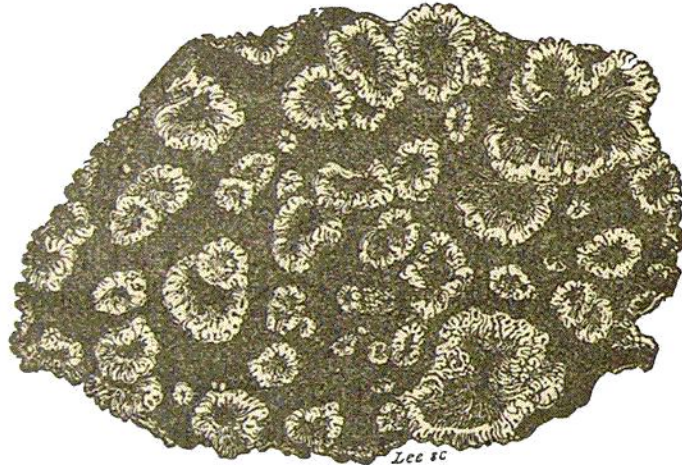


ence. The globular extremities of the branches are of a pearly texture, like the enamel of teeth, but so hard as just to scratch plate-glass. I may here mention that on a part of the coast of Ascension, where there is a vast accumulation of shelly sand, an incrustation is deposited on the tidal rocks, by the water of the sea, resembling, as represented in the woodcut, certain cryptogamic plants (*Marchantiæ*) often seen on damp walls. The surface of the fronds is beautifully glossy; and those parts formed, where fully exposed to the light, are of a jet black color, but those shaded under ledges are only gray. I have shown specimens of this



incrustation to several geologists, and they all thought that they were of volcanic or igneous origin! In its hardness and translucency—in its polish, equal to that of the finest oliva-shell—in the bad smell given out, and loss of color under the blowpipe—it shows a close similarity with living sea-shells. Moreover, in sea-shells, it is known that the parts habitually covered and shaded by the mantle of the animal are of a paler color than those fully exposed to the light, just as is the case with this incrustation. When we remember that lime, either as a phosphate or carbonate, enters into the composition of the hard parts, such as bones and shells, of all living animals, it is an interesting physio-