

It is not, perhaps, within the sphere of science to criticise the poet. Yet we may say in this place, in view of the frequent use of the lines even by scientific men, that more error in the same compass could scarcely be found than in the part of Montgomery's "Pelican Island" relating to coral formations. The poetry of this excellent author is good, but the facts nearly all errors—if literature allows of such an incongruity. There is no "toil," no "skill," no "dwelling," no "sepulchre" in the coral plantation any more than in a flower-garden; and as little are the coral polyps shapeless worms that "writhe and shrink their tortuous bodies to grotesque dimensions."

The poet oversteps his license, and besides degrades his subject, when downright false to nature.

Coral is made by organisms of four very different kinds. These are: *First*, POLYPS, the most important of coral-making animals, the principal source of the coral reefs of the world.

Second, Animals related to the little Hydra of fresh waters, and called HYDROIDS (a division under the Acalephs), which, as Agassiz has shown, form the very common and often large corals called Millepores.

Third, The lowest tribe of Mollusks, called BRYOZOANS, which produce delicate corals, sometimes branching and moss-like (whence the name from the Greek for *moss animal*), and at other times in broad plates, thick masses, and thin incrustations. Although of small importance as reef-makers at the present time, in a former age of the world—the Paleozoic—they so abounded over the sea bottom that some beds of limestone are half composed of them.

Fourth, Algæ or sea-weeds, some kinds of which would hardly be distinguished from corals, except that they have no cells or pores.

I. POLYPS.

A good idea of a polyp may be had from comparison with the garden aster; for the likeness to many of them in external form as well as delicacy of colouring is singularly close. The