

In the Corallidæ, the axis is wholly calcareous, and firm and solid throughout, with usually a red colour, varying from crimson to rose-red. Here belongs the *Corallium rubrum*, or precious coral. The polyp-crust or cortex, which covers the red axis or coral, is thin, and contains comparatively few calcareous spicules, and consequently it readily disappears when the dried specimens are handled. In an uninjured state, the polyp centres may be distinguished over it by a faint six-rayed star. A branch from a specimen obtained by the author at Naples, is represented, of natural size, in the cut on page 66. The polyps, as the enlarged view, by Lacaze Duthiers, shows, are similar to those of other Alcyonoids—the tentacles being eight in number and fringed. The figure represents the extremity of a branch, magnified about four times lineally, with one polyp fully expanded, two partly, and the rest unexpanded. In the living *Corallium*, they open out thickly over the branches, and make it an exceedingly beautiful object. The coral grows in branching forms, spreading its branches nearly in a plane; and sometimes the little shrub is over a foot in height. The author just mentioned states that, among the polyps, those of the same branch are often all of one sex alone, and that besides males and females, there are a few that combine both sexes.

The precious coral is gathered from the rocky bottom of the borders of the Mediterranean, or its islands, and most abundantly at depths of 25 to 50 feet, though occurring also even down to 1,000 feet. There are important fisheries on the coast of Southern Italy; of the island of Ponza, off the Gulf of Gaeta; of Sicily, especially at Trapani, its western extremity; of Corsica and Sardinia, in the Straits of Bonifacio; of Algeria, south of Sardinia, near Bona, Oran, and other places, which in 1853 afforded 80,000 pounds of coral; and on the coast of Marseilles. The rose-coloured is the most highly valued, because the rarest.

Another species of *Corallium* was obtained by the author at the Sandwich Islands (Atlas of Zoöphytes, plate 60); but, while probably from the seas of that region, its precise locality is not known.