calculated to defend them from compression, and from the entrance of foreign bodies. Some of these spicula are delineated in Fig. 54: but their forms, although constant in each species, admit of considerable diversity in the different kinds of sponge.

Although sponges, in common with the greater number of zoophytes, are permanently attached to rocks, and other solid bodies in the ocean, and are consequently destined to an existence as completely stationary as that of plants, yet such is not the condition of the earlier, and more transitory stages of their development. Nature, ever solicitous to provide for the multiplication of each race of beings, and for their dissemination over the habitable globe, has always provided effectual means for the accomplishment of these important ends. The seeds of plants are either scattered in the immediate neighbourhood of the parent, and take root in the adjacent soil, or are carried to more distant situations by the wind or other agents. In the animal kingdom, the young offspring of those races which are endowed with a wide range of activity, are reared on the spot where they were produced, either by the fostering care of the parent, or by means of the nourishment with which they are surrounded in the egg, and there remain until the period when, by the acquisition or extension of locomotive powers, they are enabled, in their turn, to go in quest of food. But in the tribes of animals at present under our consideration, this order is reversed. It is the parent that is chained to the same spot from an early period of its growth, and it is on the young that active powers of locomotion have been conferred, apparently for the sole purpose of seeking for itself a proper habitation at some distance from the place of its birth; and when once it has made this selection, it there fixes itself unalterably for the remaining term of its existence.*

* Phenomena, still more curious are presented by a tribe of natural productions, resembling aquatic plants in all their external characters, but, after a certain period, giving birth to an immense number of animated globules, which, for a time, move briskly in the fluid, like infusory animalcules, and then congregate together, and arrange themselves in linear juxtaposition, as