

but we are much mistaken if other and more open passages far to the north, across the pole itself will not be found.

We may take this opportunity to state that one of the bottles picked up near the mouth of the Obi, on the Siberian coast, has lately arrived at the Admiralty. In a former number we stated that several of these bottles had been found in the above locality; and that the Admiralty had requested the Russian Government to forward one to England. It was, of course, hoped that it might prove to have belonged to Franklin's ships; but, having personally examined it,—we are sorry to say, that it is evidently of foreign manufacture, and not at all likely to have been furnished to Franklin's expedition. It is about the length of a soda water bottle—but more spherical; and is formed of very dark glass, nearly a quarter of an inch thick.

We are glad to hear that Commanders McClure and Inglesfield have been promoted. To the latter we are indebted for a very clear chart showing Capt. McClure's track and discoveries;—from which the reduced map which accompanies this article has been copied.

The Daisy Anemone*.

All along this line of lime-stone rock, in almost every tide-pool and hollow that retains the sea-water, from the size of one's hand upward, we may at any time find colonies of the lovely Daisy Anemone, *Actinia bellis*. In the sunshine of a fair day they expand beautifully, and you may see them studding the face of the rock just beneath the surface, from the size of a shilling to that of a crown piece. Nothing seems easier than to secure them, but no sooner do the fingers touch them, than its beautifully circular disc begins to curl and pucker its margin, and to increase in the form of a cup; if further annoyed, the rim of this cup contracts more and more, until it closes, and the animal becomes globose and much diminished, receding all the time from the assault, and retiring into the rock. Presently you discover that you can no longer touch it at all; it is shrunk to the bottom of its hole; the sharp irregular edges of which project and furnish a stony defence to the inhabitant. Nothing will do but the chisel, and that is by no means easy of appliance. It is rare that the position of the hole is such as to allow of both arms working with any ease; the rock is under water, and often, if your chisel is short, it is wholly immersed during the work, when every blow which the hammer strikes upon its head has to fall upon a stratum of water, which splashes forcibly into your eyes and over your clothes; the rock is very hard, and the chisel makes little impression; and what is frequently the greatest disappointment of all, the powdery debris produced by the bruising of the stone mingles with the water and presently makes it perfectly opaque, as if a quantity of powdered chalk had been mixed with it, so that you cannot see how to direct the blows, you cannot discern whether you have uncovered the *Actinia* or not, and frequently are obliged to give up the attempt when nearly accomplished, simply because you can neither see hole nor *Actinia*, and as to feeling in the pap-like mud that your implement has been making, it is out of the question. Supposing, however, that you have got on pretty well, that by making a current in the pool with your hand you have washed away the clouded water sufficiently to see the whereabouts, and that you perceive that another well-directed blow or two will split off the side of the cavity,—you have now to take care so to proportion the force that at last you may neither crush the animal with the chisel on the one hand, nor on the other drive it off so suddenly that it shall fall with the fragment to the bottom of the pool out of reach. However, we will suppose you have happily detached and secured

your *Actinia* without injury. But how unlike its former self, when you were desirous of making its closer acquaintance, is it now! A little hard globose knob of flesh, not so big as a school-boy's marble, is the creature that just now expanded to the sun's rays a lovely disk of variegated hues, with a diameter greater than that of a Spanish dollar. It is moreover covered with tenacious white slime, which exudes from it faster than you can clear it away; and altogether its appearance is any thing but inviting. You turn it into a jar of water, which of course you have with you when collecting living zoophytes; and thus bring it home, when you transfer it to a tumbler or other suitable vessel of clear sea-water freshly drawn. And here let us watch its changes;—which, however, will not be effected immediately; for it will not expand itself in all its original beauty until it has taken a fresh attachment for its base, which will not in all probability be for a day or two at least. The body or stem of *Actinia bellis* is more or less cylindrical generally; though subject to some change in this respect, for it is occasionally a little enlarged, as it approaches the disk; the sucking base is slightly larger than the diameter of the body, which in specimens of an inch and a half expanse, may be about half an inch. The length of the body varies much, according to the depth of the cavity in which the animal lives, for it must expand its disk at the surface. In the open water in a vase, when it appears at home, it may commonly be about an inch from the base to the expansion of the disk, but I have a beautiful specimen before my eye at this moment, which has stretched itself to a height of three inches, expanding at the extremity as usual: the thickness of the stem is in this case somewhat diminished.

Extraordinary Fishes from California, constituting a New Family, described by L. Agassiz.*

About fifteen months ago, I received a letter from A. C. Jackson, Esq., soon after his return from San Francisco, California, informing me that while fishing in San Salita Bay, he had caught with the hook and line, a fish of the perch family, containing living young. The statement seemed so extraordinary, that though an outline of the specimen observed was enclosed, I suspected some mistake, and requested Mr. Jackson to furnish me further information upon what he had actually seen, and if possible specimens of the fish preserved in alcohol. To this enquiry I received the following answer:

"I regret much that the information which I sent you avails so little, without the actual specimens of the fish and young; these, however, I have already taken active measures to obtain, and trust before many months, to be able to send you at least specimens of the female, if not of the young. I should at the time I caught the fish have preserved them in alcohol, but at that time I was attached to the Navy Yard commission, and was with my comrades industriously prosecuting the examination of the vicinity of San Salita, as to its adaptiveness for a navy yard, and could not leave for San Francisco without suspending the work, and the means for preserving the fish could not be otherwise procured. This explains the apparent culpable indifference which allowed me to omit preserving the specimens. I have sent directions to California to have caught for me several of the fish, and if at the present time, (September 16th, 1852,) the females were pregnant (which is not probable) to take from one the bag containing the young, and put mother and young into the jar of alcohol, and to put several other females untouched into the jar also. These specimens will by direction and examination, even if they be not pregnant, and if the jar contains no young, determine the truth and accuracy of the statement I made in my former letter on the subject. This fact, proved by these specimens, it will be

* Extract from a Naturalist's rambles on the Devonshire Coast.—By Philip Henry Gosse.

* Silliman's Journal, November.