

animal life. It is classed by naturalists among the Polypi, a race of animals (if animals they can be called) whose structure is very simple, and whose faculties are exceedingly limited. They seem to form the connecting link between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and receive the designation of *Zoophites*, or *animal plants*. All the species, with perhaps a single exception, fasten themselves to the solid rock, being destitute of the power of locomotion. This animalcule can hardly be said to possess any form. It is a minute bag of matter, with no organs save a few tentacles around the mouth. With these it secretes calcareous matter from its food, found in the waters, and, by an internal process, transforms it into a substance which constitutes its abode. This at first is semi-transparent, and of extreme delicacy, but it becomes hardened, and has the appearance of bone. This is the substance which we term coral. It is of several varieties, and contains cells, which formed the abode of the insect. This animalcule has the power of sending forth germs, which continually repeat the same action, and thus in process of time, by the combined action of myriads of insects, are groups of islands formed in the midst of the restless waters of the mighty ocean.

An interesting writer relates the particulars of a visit to the museum of the celebrated Agassiz, who has succeeded in preserving alive some coral insects. She (Lady Wortley) thus speaks of them. "They were kept in water, carefully and frequently changed, and various precautions were indispensably necessary to be taken in order to guard their exquisitely delicate demi-semi-existence. As to me, I hardly dared breathe while looking at them, for fear I should blow their lives away, or some catastrophe should happen while we were there, and we should be suspected of *coralicide*. However, the sight was most interesting. We watched them as they flung about what seemed their fire-like white arms, like microscopic opera dancers, or windmills; but these apparent arms are, I believe, all they possess of bodies."

Animals of this kind, when favorably situated, multiply to such an extent as to form reefs, and sub-marine banks, often extending a thousand miles, or more. As soon as they reach low-water mark they cease to exist, but their solid covering or house remains, and, with the remains of their decayed bodies, constitutes a soil. But a new series of changes now takes place. Exposed to the action of the atmosphere, this mass of calcareous matter,