MADREPORA FUNGITES.

CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Animal *Medusa*.

Corallium cavitatibus lamelloso-stellatis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1272.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

MADREPORA simplex acaulis convexa, subtus
plerumque concava, interdum convexa et
pedunculata.

FUNGUS LAPIDOSUS.

Clus. exot. 125. f. 1.

FUNGUS LAPIDEUS.

Buch. hist. 3. p. 801. f. 1, 2.

Cum anteaſtis temporibus, dormiret recentiorum philoſophorum curioſa ſedulitas, quæ jam fere per totum orbem feliciter diffunditur; nugis et fabellis anilibus ſæpius credebatur, vetuitque plurimorum hominum hebes incuria ut vel ampla eſſet ſpeciminum ſupellex, vel etiam naſtorum plena et genuina deſcriptio. In plantis igitur et animalibus indies erratum eſt. Radix filicis in ſeptentrionali Aſia ſatis vulgaris naturam cum quadrupede participare diù cenſebatur, vocabaturque communiter

niter *agnus vegetabilis*. Gryllorum certæ species exoticæ quibus alæ sunt amplæ, virides, et venosæ, folia animata habebantur: nec defuere qui serio et pertinaciter asseruerunt arborum quarundam Indicarum et Americanarum, simul ac deciderant folia, subito alis pedibusque gaudentia circa ipsam arborem volitare. Corallium quoque, seu Madreporam in tabula depictam, fungum esse, sive agaricon in lapidem conversum opinabantur tunc temporis physici. Ignoscendum est sane huic errori potius quam aliis multis, cum Madrepora agarico simillima plerosque spectatores (exceptis paucis, quibus res penitus scrutari cordi est) posset decipere. Comperti sunt tandem in India Orientali, ubi frequentior est Madrepora, seduli examinatores, esse eam fulcrum seu habitaculum substantiæ gelatinosæ et animatæ, forma ad *Medusas* ut vocantur, orbiculatas et depressoas accedentis. Efficit animal mirandum hoc domicilium, materiem calcariam glutinosam ab omni corporis parte copiose exprimendo; ita ut fulci seu depressiones in Madrepora, lamellis totidem acutis et radiatis in ipsius animalis corpore respondeant; quod cum sit tenerimum, aeri expositum in meram pelliculam paucis horis decrescit, nec nisi in aqua marina, qua nascitur, probe potest examinari. In nonnullis speciminibus ex parte inferiore, seu concava, proles minor varia protruditur. In India præcipue Orientali invenitur Madrepora Fungites, crescitque interdum ad magnitudinem sex unciarum in diametro, interdum vix unam superat. Color albus non caret elegantiâ, totaque superficies exterior tuberculis minutissimis leviter exasperatur. Lamellarum margines interrupto ordine serratæ sunt.

THE MUSHROOM MADREPORE.

GENERIC CHARACTER.

The *Animal* resembling a Medusa.

The *Coral* marked by lamellated star-shaped cavities.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

MADREPORE with rising or convex laminæ above, generally concave and papillose beneath, and sometimes footstalked.

Before that spirit of inquiry which characterizes the modern cultivators of natural history began to diffuse itself in Europe, innumerable errors were committed in the histories both of animals and vegetables, while the general neglect with which the major part of mankind regarded subjects of this nature, still increased the difficulty of obtaining proper specimens and descriptions of several of the most curious and interesting productions of nature. The root of a species of fern, not uncommon in the northern parts of Asia, was supposed to partake of the nature of a quadruped, and was dignified by the title of the vegetable lamb. Some of the locust tribe with large green veiny wings were believed to

to be animated leaves; and there were not wanting those who were ready to vouch the certainty of the leaves which fell from several trees in India and America becoming suddenly furnished with legs and wings, and soon after fluttering round the branches of the tree which gave them birth; while the coral which forms the subject of the present plate was regarded as a species of petrified mushroom. It must be confessed that of all erroneous ideas this was one of the most plausible; for so very striking is the general resemblance which this coral bears to the genus *Agaricus*, that it is impossible not to be forcibly impressed with the similarity of the structure. From observations, however, which have been made in those parts of India where it is commonly found, it appears to be the production of an animal of a soft or gelatinous nature, and which bears a general affinity to the shape of the orbicular depressed *Medusæ* or Sea-Blubbers. The animal forms this curious fulcrum or habitation by secreting a copious deposition of calcarious matter from every part of its body, and the fulci or furrows in the *Madrepore* answer to so many sharp radiated laminae of the creature's body. So tender is this animal, that it collapses and shrinks to a mere pellicle when exposed for some hours to the air; so that it is only in the sea-water that it can be viewed to advantage. Some specimens of this *Madrepore* are proliferous, or have young productions of the same form growing from several parts of the concave or lower surface. The *Madrepora Fungites* is found of various sizes, from an inch to six inches in diameter. Its colour is an elegant white, and every part of the
external

external surface is roughened by small protuberances, and the edges of the lamellæ or gills are irregularly serrated. It is principally found on the coasts of the East Indies.

Shaw, George. 1791. "The Mushroom Madrepore, Madrepora fungites [Pl. 79]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 3(XXVI), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.304499>.

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