

by rings and layers in proportion as the animal grows; and stony matter often exceeds fifty or sixty times the mass of the body which produces it. Let us, for a moment, reflect on the number of the kind of shell-animals, or rather of those animals with a stony transudation; they, possibly, are more numerous in the sea than the insect kind are upon earth. Let us afterwards represent their full growth, their prodigious multiplication, and the shortness of their lives, which we may suppose does not exceed ten years; let us then consider that we must multiply by fifty or sixty the almost immense number of the individuals of this class to form an idea of all the stony matter produced in ten years; then that this block must be augmented with as many similar blocks as there are as many times ten in all the ages from the beginning of the world, and by this means we shall conceive, that all our coral, rocks of calcareous stone, marble, chalk, &c. originally proceeded alone from the cast-off coats of those little animals.

Salts, bitumen, oil, and the grease of the sea, enter little or none into the composition of the shell; neither does the calcareous stone contain any of those matters; this stone is, therefore, only water transformed, joined to some little portion of vitrifiable earth, and to a  
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