

terance, and raised no echo to awaken further inquiry. The only opposition to the botanical theory came from the mineralogists, who some of them questioned the vegetability of such of these productions as were of a hard and stony nature, contending they were rather rocks or stones formed by the sediment and agglutination of a submarine general compost of calcareous and argillaceous materials, moulded into the figures of trees and mosses by the motion of the waves, by crystallization, by the incrustation of real fuci, or by some imagined vegetative power in brute matter. But although not more—perhaps less repugnant to the outward sense than the opposite hypothesis, yet the mineral theory seems at no time to have obtained very general favour or credit; and accordingly we find that, in the works of Tournefort and Ray,* the leading naturalists of the age immediately antecedent to the discoveries which led to the modern doctrines, the zoophytes, whether calcareous and hard, or horny and flexible, were arranged and described among sea-weeds and mosses without any misgivings concerning the propriety of doing so.

Ferrante Imperato, an apothecary in Naples, was the first naturalist, according to M. De Blainville, distinctly to publish, as the result of his proper observations, the animality of corals and madrepores,† and he is said to have accompanied the de-

* In his “Wisdom of God in the Creation,” Ray has, however, reckoned the *Lithophyta* among “inanimate mixed bodies.” Of these, he says, “some have a kind of vegetation and resemblance of plants, as corals, pori, and fungites, which grow upon the rocks like shrubs.”—p. 83, duod. Lond. 1826. His opinions on this point were probably unsettled; and certainly many naturalists believed that Ovid only expressed the simple fact when he wrote—

“Sic et curalium, quo primum contigit auras

“Tempore durescit; mollis fuit herba sub undis.”

Metam. lib. xv.

† Man. d'Actinol. p. 14.—Lamouroux on the contrary places Imperato on the same level with Gesner, Boccone, and Shaw—none of whom had any distinct notion of the animality of *any* zoophytes, and had no doubt of the vegetable nature of almost all of them. “Les observations de ces hommes célèbres, au lieu d'éclairer les naturalistes sur cette branche intéressante de la science, embrouillaient encore plus son étude.”—Lam. Cor. Flex. Introd. p. xiv. My copy of Imperato's work is of the edition printed at Venice in 1672, folio. It is written entirely in Italian, and, being ignorant of that language, I can give no opinion of the value of its letter-press. The only copper-plate is a very curious one representing the interior of Imperato's museum, which appears to have been a very elegant and copious collection of curiosities, a servant pointing with a