that this eminent naturalist was engaged in forming a collection of marine plants for the instruction of the young princesses in botany, and having occasion to examine some of the specimens through a powerful microscope, he was astonished to find that the sponges, which were then supposed to be marine plants, possessed a system of vessels through which the sea-water circulated; and that many of the corallines exhibited pores, from which tentacula or feelers were constantly protruding, and then suddenly retracting, as if seizing and devouring prey. Subsequent observations have confirmed his opinion, that the substance we call sponge is the skeleton, or support, of a vascular substance which invests it, and which may be considered as the flesh of this animal. When viewed through the microscope, innumerable pores are seen on the surface of the sponge constantly imbibing salt water, which circulates throughout the mass, and is finally rejected from the large openings; this water doubtless contains the living atoms that constitute the food of this compound animal, but which are so minute as to elude our observation.

7. NATURE OF SPONGE.—This simple form of animal existence approaches so nearly to that of plants, that it will be instructive to dwell a few moments on the investigation of its structure. The living sponge, when highly magnified, exhibits a cellular tissue, permeated by pores, which unite into cells, or tubes, that ramify through the mass in every