

41. STRUCTURE OF THE CRINOIDEA.—The skeleton of the crinoidea is formed of numerous ossicula or little bones, and consists of an upright articulated column, permanently attached by the base, and terminating at the summit in a cup-like receptacle, or basin, also composed of bony, jointed plates.

This basin, or pelvis, which contains the body of the animal, is formed of several plates, and surrounded by long, jointed arms, or tentacula; it is affixed to the stem by a pentagonal plate, which is placed in the centre of the base. The column, in most species, is of great length, and consists of separate bones, articulated, and regularly pierced in the centre, having the articulating surfaces, as I have already explained, ornamented with radiated, stellular, or floriform markings; it has numerous side-arms or lateral processes; and the inferior part has a pedicle, or process of attachment, by which the animal was fixed to other bodies. (See Tab. 117, 118.) In the recent state the skeleton was clothed with a fleshy, or coriaceous integument; the central perforation in the bones of the column was probably filled by a medullary, or nervous chord. The crinoidea, like the corals, were permanently attached to the spot where they grew. The mouth was placed in the centre of the upper part of the body, or pelvis, and the arms by expanding, like the tentacula of the polype, could seize their prey and bring it to the mouth. The only recent species