

tubular tentacula. The mouth is situated in the centre of the under surface. Now, if we imagine a Star-fish placed with the mouth upwards, its five rays fringed with long articulated tentacula, and fixed by the centre of the under or dorsal surface on a jointed stem, we shall have the essential character of a Crinoidean ; and the animals of one recent genus of *Stelleridæ* are actually in this condition in the earlier stage of their existence : these are the *Comatulæ*, or feather-stars.*

It has been well remarked by Professor Forbes, that from the vast importance of the Crinoideæ in the economy of the ancient world, the history of the only crinoidal animal at present inhabiting the British seas, which at one time swarmed with those beautiful and wonderful creatures, must present many points of interest even to the general observer. The receptacle of the soft body of the *Comatulæ*, like that of the crinoideans, consists of a cup-shaped calcareous base, which sends off five arms, that quickly subdivide, and are beset on each side with rows of articulated pinnæ ; on its convexity there are also numerous slender-jointed simple tentacula. The mouth is situated in the centre of the area, surrounded by the arms, and is capable of being elon-

* The reader interested in this subject should peruse the elegant and charming volume on British Star-fishes and other Echinoderma, by Professor Forbes. 1 vol. 8vo. John Van Voorst. 1841.