

Genera of Zoophytes most common in coral reefs.

Fig. 88.

Fig. 87



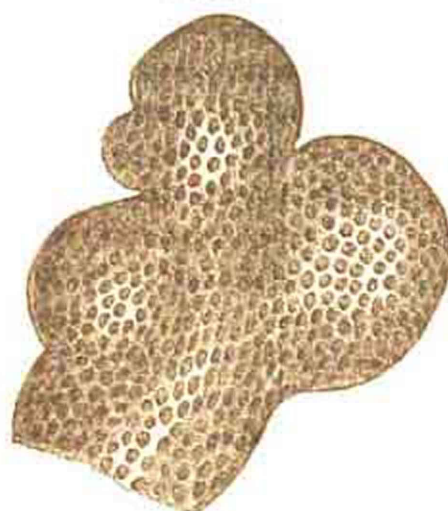
Extremity of branch of *Madrepora muricata*, Lin.



*Caryophyllia fastigiata*, Lam.

Fig. 90.

Fig. 89.



*Porites clavaria*, Lam.



*Oculina hirtella*, Lam.

*Rate of the growth of coral.*—Very different opinions have been entertained in regard to the rate at which coral reefs increase. In Captain Beechey's late expedition to the Pacific, no positive information could be obtained of any channel having been filled up within a given period; and it seems established, that several reefs had remained for more than half a century, at about the same depth from the surface.

Ehrenberg also questions the fact of channels and harbours having been closed up in the Red Sea by the rapid increase of coral limestone. He supposes the notion to have arisen from the circumstance of havens having been occasionally filled up in some places with coral sand, in others with large quantities of ballast of coral rock thrown down from vessels.

The natives of the Bermuda Islands point out certain corals now growing in the sea, which, according to tradition, have been living