deposit appears to have been a muddy one, and unfavorable, in consequence, to the growth of corals. Comparatively early in the period, however, a pause took place in the process of deposition, massive corals began to form at the bottom of a clear sea; the term of rest was protracted for ages; as one corallum died, another formed over it, until at length the bed had become several feet thick, and then the deposit suddenly returned to its old conditions. An arenaceous mud began to be cast down, which insinuated itself into all the interstices of the bed, as the run lime of the mediæval builders insinuated itself among the loose stones with which they filled up the interior portions of their walls. In circumstances so ungenial the coralites died; stratum after stratum, — not a few of these richly charged with the peculiar shells of the Lias, — ammonites, belemnites, and the characteristic gryphæa incurva, — were heaped over them to the depth of several hundred feet. In a few of the overlying strata the same coral again appeared, but only in small and unfrequent specimens; and, so far as we yet know, not until the times of the Lower Oolite did corals in any considerable abundance again live in the seas of the Scottish Oolitic system.

The Lower Oolite, as developed in the neighborhood of Helmsdale, on the north-eastern coast of the kingdom, is comparatively rich in corals; at least, if species be not numerous, individual specimens are far from rare. I stated to the Society on a previous occasion, that on examining, some years since, a heap of materials collected along the beach in that neighborhood for burning into lime, I found that about two-thirds of the whole consisted of fossil wood, and the remaining third of a massive fossil coral. This coral, also an Isastrea, is of great size: I have seen specimens which a strong man could scarce raise from the ground; and a specimen on the table of the Society, selected, however, rather for its fine form than for its bulk, measures full eighteen inches in length, by about a foot