

to give a slight viscosity to the mud of the surface layer. If the mud be shaken with weak spirit of wine, fine flakes separate like coagulated mucus; and if a little of the mud in which this viscid condition is most marked be placed in a drop of seawater under the microscope, we can usually see, after a time, an irregular network of matter resembling white of egg, distinguishable by its maintaining its outline and not mixing with the water. This network may be seen gradually altering in form, and entangled granules and foreign bodies change their relative positions. The gelatinous matter is therefore capable of a certain amount of movement, and there can be no doubt that it manifests the phenomena of a very simple form of life.

To this organism, if a being can be so called which shows no trace of differentiation of organs, consisting apparently of an amorphous sheet of a protein compound, irritable to a low degree and capable of assimilating food, Professor Huxley has given the name of *Bathybius haeckelii* (Fig. 63). If this have a claim to be recognized as a distinct living entity, exhibiting its mature and final form, it must be referred to the simplest division of the shell-less rhizopoda, or if we adopt the class proposed by Professor Haeckel, to the monera. The circumstance which gives its special interest to *Bathybius* is its enormous extent: whether it be continuous in one vast sheet, or broken up into circumscribed individual particles, it appears to extend over a large part of the bed of the ocean; and as no living thing, however slowly it may live, is ever perfectly at rest, but is continually acting and reacting with its surroundings, the bottom of the