

Off the Butt of the Lews, in water of 450 to 500 fathoms, we met on two occasions with full-grown specimens of a species of the remarkable genus *Hyalonema* (Fig. 66), with the coils in the larger examples upwards of 40 centimetres in length. *Hyalonema* is certainly a very striking object; and although our specimens belong apparently to the same species, *H. lusitanicum*, which has already been recorded by Professor Barboza du Bocage from the coast of Portugal, it is one of the most interesting additions made to the British fauna during our cruise.

A bundle of from 200 to 300 threads of transparent silica, glistening with a silky lustre, like the most brilliant spun-glass,—each thread from 30 to 40 centimetres long, in the middle the thickness of a knitting needle, and gradually tapering towards either end to a fine point; the whole bundle coiled like a strand of rope into a lengthened spiral, the threads of the middle and upper portions remaining compactly coiled by a permanent twist of the individual threads; the lower part of the coil, which, when the sponge is living, is imbedded in the mud, frayed out so that the glassy threads stand separate from one another, like the bristles of a glittering brush; the upper portion of the coil close and compact, imbedded perpendicularly in a conical or cylindrical sponge; and usually part of the upper portion of the silicious coil, and part of the sponge-substance, covered with a brownish leathery coating, whose surface is studded with the polyps of an alcyonarian zoophyte:—such is the general effect of a complete specimen of *Hyalonema*.