

CHAPTER SECOND.

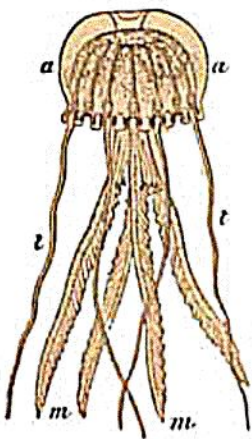
ACALEPHS AS A CLASS.

SECTION I.

MODE OF DETERMINING THE NATURAL LIMITS OF THE CLASS.

AFTER what has been said, in the first volume of this work, respecting systems in Zoölogy, it is hardly necessary to repeat here, that no arbitrary arrangement

Fig. 1.



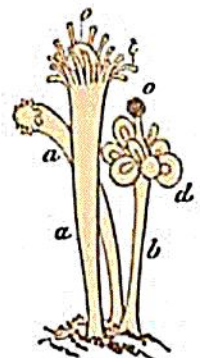
PELAGIA CYANELLA,
Pér. and LeS.

a a Umbrella. — *m m* Mouth tentacles, or arms; the prolongation of the angles of the mouth. — *t t* Marginal tentacles.

of animals can ever constitute a natural classification. Were it not so, every naturalist might present an arrangement suited to his individual views, and for which he would have as much authority as any one else. The absurdity of such a view, when clearly stated, is at once obvious. And yet most classifications have no better foundation for their details than a vague feeling of appropriateness in the minds of class of Acalephs, however, has presented particular difficulties to systematic writers; and it is not too much to say, that there are no two naturalists, conversant with the animals belonging to this type, who agree in their arrangement of them. Nay, the limits of this class are by no means clearly

determined; for, while some unite under that name only the free moving gelatinous Radiata (Fig. 1), others would associate with them a number of pedunculated individuals and fixed communities of animals somewhat allied to Polyps (Fig. 2), and actually united with Polyps by some naturalists. Again, some refer to the class of Polyps all the compound

Fig. 2.



HYDRACTINIA POLYCLINA, Ag.

a a Sterile individuals. — *b* Fertile individual, producing male Medusæ. — *d* Clusters of male Medusæ. — *o o* Proboscis, with the mouth at the apex. — *t* Elongated tentacles of the sterile individuals; in the fertile one *b*, they are simple knobs upon the proboscis *o*.