

DISCOPHORÆ.

CHAPTER FIRST.

DISCOPHORÆ IN GENERAL.

SECTION I.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISCOPHORÆ.

THE order of the Discophoræ, as I believe it to be limited in nature, does not embrace all the Acalephs referred to it by Eschscholtz, but only those which he calls Discophoræ Phanerocarpæ, and which Forbes has designated under the name of Steganophthalmata, and Gegenbaur under that of Acraspeda. To these I think some of the Cryptocarpæ, such as the Charybdeidæ and Æginidæ, which were but imperfectly known to Eschscholtz, must also be added. But, whatever be the true limits of the subdivisions which the progress of science has rendered necessary among the Discophoræ, since these Acalephs were first united as one group by Lamarck, and finally characterized as an order by Eschscholtz, so much is certain, that there are two distinct types among them, differing widely in their structure as well as in their mode of reproduction. I believe, however, that the true principle upon which they may be distinguished has not yet been pointed out, and that neither the presence nor the absence of a veil around the margin of their disk, upon which Gegenbaur has based his division of the Craspedota and Acraspeda, neither the exposed nor the protected position of the marginal eye-specks, which Forbes has taken as a basis for the separation of the Steganophthalmata and Gymnophthalmata, nor the development of the ovaries and spermaries, upon which