

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE GENUS AURELIA AND ITS SPECIES.

SECTION I.

GENERAL REMARKS.

THE methods now pursued, in treating subjects of Natural History, are to a great extent stereotyped, according to the topics under consideration. In descriptive zoölogy it is customary to introduce short characteristic phrases, called diagnoses, pointing out prominently the most striking differences among species, and to have longer and more minute descriptions follow, in which every peculiarity that may have been noticed is enumerated at full length; but, in a laudable zeal for fulness and accuracy, it happens but too frequently that remarks are introduced in no way relating to specific characters. Some naturalists make the study of species an occasion of ascertaining more fully their various degrees of affinity or relationship, with a view to their systematic arrangement; while others study with greater care the habits of animals, or their geographical distribution, or their uses to man. In comparative anatomy the modes of treatment are not less varied. Some authors, devoting themselves chiefly to a thorough investigation of the structure of animals, describe their organization in the minutest manner; but we constantly find structural features which may be common to an entire family, nay even to whole classes, dealt with, in such monographs, as if they were specific peculiarities of the animals under consideration. Other writers aim more especially at a study of the relations which exist between structures seemingly very different from one another; and thus, while they may acquire a deeper insight into the laws of the organization of animals and trace the remotest homologies and distinguish them from analogical resemblances, frequently overlook the typical differences which constitute natural subordinate groups in the animal kingdom. Others limit their