

eggs should, therefore, be considered as a universal characteristic of the Animal Kingdom.

277. *Form of the Egg.*—The general form of the egg is more or less spherical. The eggs of birds have the form of an elongated spheroid, narrow at one end; and this form is so constant, that the term *oval* has been universally adopted to designate it. But this is by no means the usual form of the eggs of other animals.

In most instances, on the contrary they are spherical, especially among the lower animals. Some have singular appendages, as those

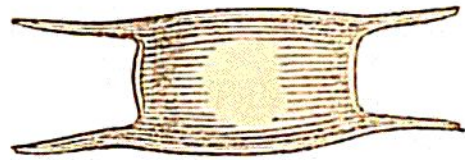


Fig. 95.

of the skates and sharks, (Fig. 95,) which are shaped like a hand-barrow, with four hooked horns at the corners. The eggs of the hydra, or fresh water polyp, are thickly covered with prickles, (Fig. 96.) Those of certain insects, the Podurella, for example, are furnished with filaments which give them a hairy aspect, (Fig. 97;) others are cylindrical or prismatic; and frequently the surface is sculptured.



Fig. 96.

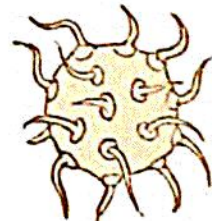


Fig. 97.

278. *Formation of the Egg.*—The egg originates within peculiar organs, called *ovaries*, which are glandular bodies, usually situated in the abdominal cavity. So long as the eggs remain in the ovary, they are very minute in size. In this condition they are called *ovarian*, or *primitive eggs*. They are identical in all animals, being, in fact, merely little cells (*v*) containing yolk, (*y*), and including other smaller cells, the germinative vesicle, (*g*), and the germinative dot, (*d*.) The yolk itself, with its membrane, (*v*), is formed while the egg remains in the ovary. It is afterwards enclosed in another envelope, the shell membrane, which may remain soft, (*s*),

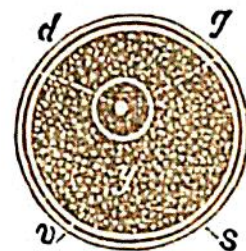


Fig. 98.