

deny the reality of natural groups, because of these early resemblances, would be to take the semblance for the reality. It would be the same as saying that the frog and the fish are one, because at one stage of embryonic life it is impossible, with the means at our command, to distinguish them.

361. The account we have above given of the development, the metamorphoses, and the alternate reproduction of the lower animals, is sufficient to undermine the old theory of *Spontaneous Generation*, which was proposed to account for the presence of worms in the bodies of animals, for the sudden appearance of myriads of animalcules in stagnant water, and under other circumstances rendering their occurrence mysterious. We need only to recollect how the *Cercaria* insinuates itself into the skin and the viscera of mollusks, (339, 342,) to understand how admission may be gained to the most inaccessible parts. Such beings occur even in the eye of many animals, especially of fishes; they are numerous in the eye of the common fresh-water perch of Europe. To the naked eye they seem like little white spots, (Fig. 145;) but when magnified, they have the form of Fig. 146.



Fig. 145.

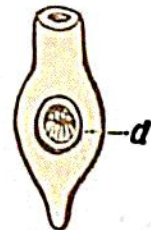


Fig. 146.

362. As to the larger intestinal worms found in other animals, the mystery of their origin has been entirely solved by recent researches. A single instance will illustrate their history. At certain periods of the year, the Sculpins of the Baltic are infested by a particular species of *Tænia* or tapeworm, from which they are free at other seasons. Mr. Eschricht found that, at certain seasons, the worms lose a great portion of the long chain of rings of which they are composed. On a careful examination, he found that each ring