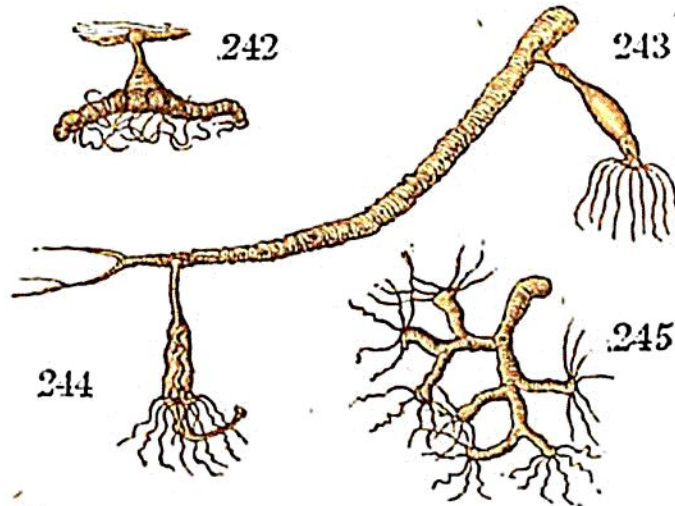


account of his observations. The hydra, though it does not pursue the animals on which it feeds, yet devours with avidity all kinds of living prey that come within the reach of its tentacula, and which it can overcome and introduce into its mouth. The larvæ of insects, naides, and other aquatic worms, minute crustacea, and even small fishes, are indiscriminately laid hold of, if they happen but to touch any part of the long filaments which the animal spreads out, in different directions, like a net in search of food. The struggles of the captive which finds itself entangled in the folds of these tentacula, are generally ineffectual, and the hydra, like the boa constrictor, contrives, by enormously expanding its mouth, slowly to draw into its cavity animals much larger than its own body. Worms longer than itself are easily swallowed by being previously doubled together by the tentacula. Fig. 242 shows a hydra in the act of devouring the vermiform larva of a *Tipula*, which it has en-



circled with its tentacula, to which it has applied its expanded mouth, and of which it is absorbing the juice, before swallowing it. Fig. 243 shows the same animal, after it has succeeded, though not without a severe contest, in swallowing a minnow, or other small fish, the form of which is still visible through the transparent sides of the body, which are stretched to the utmost. It occasionally happens, when two of these animals have both seized the same object by