

its different ends, that a struggle between them ensues, and that the stronger, having obtained the victory, swallows at a single gulp, not only the object of contention, but its antagonist also. This scene is represented in Fig. 244, where the tail of the hydra, of which the body has been swallowed by the victor, is seen protruding from the mouth of the latter. It soon, however, extricates itself from this situation, apparently without having suffered the smallest injury. The voracity of the hydra is very great, especially after long fasting; and it will then devour a great number of insects, one after another, at one meal, gorging itself till it can hold no more, and its body becoming dilated to an extraordinary size; and yet the same animal can continue to live for more than four months without any visible supply of food.

On attentively observing the changes induced upon the food by the action of the stomach of these animals, they appear to consist of a gradual melting down of the softer parts, which are resolved into a kind of jelly, leaving unaltered only a few fragments of the harder and less digestible parts. These changes are accompanied by a kind of undulation of the contents of the stomach, backwards and forwards, throughout the whole tube, apparently produced by the contraction and dilatation of its different portions. The undigested materials being collected together and rejected by the mouth, the remaining fluid is seen to contain opaque globules of various sizes, some of which are observed to penetrate through the sides of the stomach, and enter into the granular structure which composes the flesh of the animal. Some portion of this opaque fluid is distributed to the tentacula, into the tubular cavities of which it may be seen entering by passages of communication with the stomach. By watching attentively the motions of the globules, it will be perceived that they pass backwards and forwards through these passages, like ebbing and flowing tides.

All these phenomena may be observed with greater distinctness when the food of the animal contains colouring matter, capable of giving a tinge to the nutritious fluid, and