

are totally unprovided with either pedicle, arms, or tentacula; others, furnished with these latter appendages, are equally destitute of such a cavity; and those belonging to a third family possess a kind of pouch, or false stomach, at the upper part of the pedicle, apparently formed by the mere folding in of the integument. This is the case with the *Geronia*, depicted in Fig. 250, whose structure, in this respect, approaches that of the Hydra, already described, where the stomach consists of an open sac apparently formed by the integuments alone. Thence a regular progression may be followed, through various species, in which the aperture of this pouch is more and more completely closed, and where the tube which enters it branches out into ramifications more or less numerous, as we have seen in the *Rhizostoma*.* It is difficult to conceive in what mode nutrition is performed in the agastric tribes, or those destitute of any visible stomach; unless we suppose that their nourishment is imbibed by direct absorption from the surface.

Ever since the discovery of the animalcula of infusions, naturalists have been extremely desirous of ascertaining the nature of the organization of these curious beings; but as no mode presented itself of dissecting objects of such extreme minuteness, it was only from the external appearances they present under the microscope that any inferences could be drawn with regard to the existence and form of their internal organs. In most of the larger species, the opaque globules, seen in various parts of the interior, were generally supposed to be either the ova, or the future young, lodged within the body of the parent. In the *Rotifer*, or wheel animalcule of Spallanzani,† a large central organ is plainly perceptible, which was by some imagined to be the heart; but which has been clearly ascertained, by Bonnet, to be a receptacle for food. Muller, and several other observers, have witnessed the larger animalcules devouring the smaller; and the inference was obvious, that, in common with all

* See Péron, *Annales du Muséum*, xiv. 330.

† Vol. i. p. 58, Fig. 1.