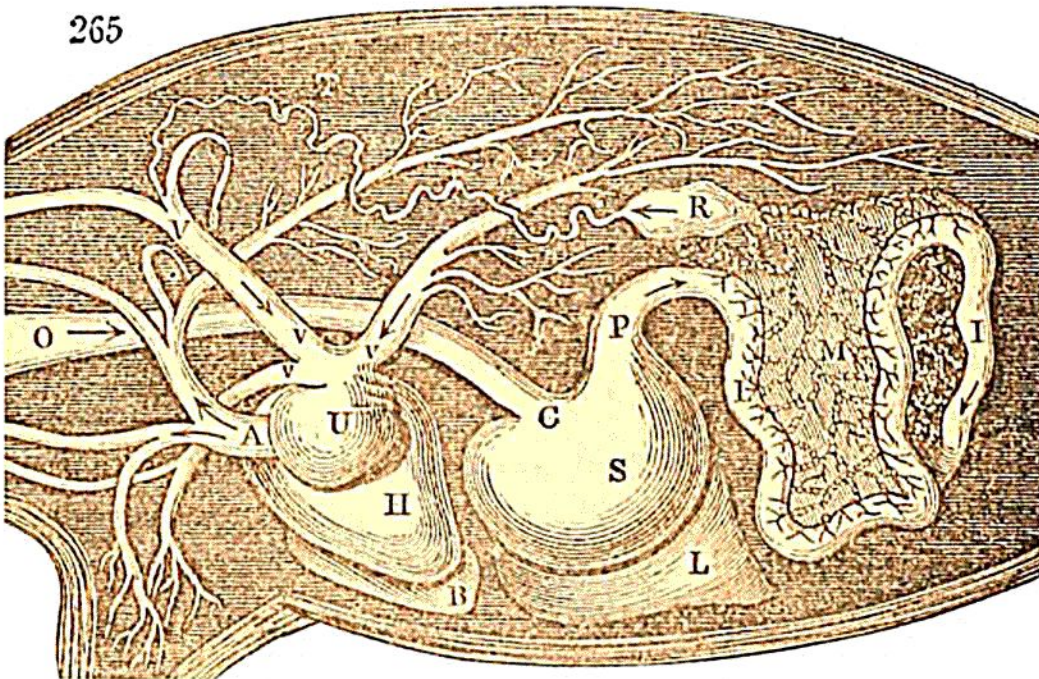


uniform distribution of the nutritious fluids elaborated by the organs of digestion. This separation of functions, again, leads to the introduction of another system of canals or vessels, for transmitting the fluids from the organs which prepare them to the heart, as into a general reservoir. In the higher orders of the animal kingdom, all these processes are again subdivided and varied, according to the species of food, the habits and mode of life, assigned by nature to each individual species. For the purpose of conveying clearer notions of the arrangement of this extensive system of vital organs, I have drawn the annexed plan (Fig. 265,) which

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exhibits them in their natural order of connexion, and as they might be supposed to appear in a side view of the interior of a quadruped. To this diagram I shall make frequent reference in the following description of this system.

The food is, in the first place, prepared for digestion by several mechanical operations, which loosen its texture and destroy its cohesion. It is torn asunder and broken down by the action of the jaws and of the teeth; and it is, at the same time, softened by an admixture with the fluid secretions of the mouth. It is then collected into a mass, by the action of the muscles of the check and tongue, and swal-