

water. Thus, the whale is enabled to collect a whole shoal of mollusca, and other small prey, by taking into its mouth the sea water which contains these animals, and allowing it to drain off through the sides, after passing through the interstices of the net work formed by the filaments of the whalebone. Some contrivance of this kind was necessary to this animal, because the entrance into its œsophagus is too narrow to admit of the passage of any prey of considerable size; and it is not furnished with teeth to reduce the food into smaller parts. The principle food of the *Balæna Mysticetus*, or great whalebone whale of the Arctic Seas, is the small *Clio Borealis*, which swarms in immense numbers in those regions of the ocean; and which has been already delineated in Fig. 120.*

These remarkable organs for filtration entirely supersede the use of ordinary teeth; and, accordingly, no traces of teeth are to be discovered either in the upper or lower jaw. Yet a tendency to conform to the type of the mammalia is manifested in the early conformation of the whale; for rudiments of teeth exist in the interior of the lower jaw before birth, lodged in deep sockets, and forming a row on each side. The development of these imperfect teeth proceeds no farther; they even disappear at a very early period, and the groove which contained them closes over, and, after a short time, can no longer be seen. For the discovery of this curious fact we are indebted to Geoffroy St. Hilaire.† In connexion with this subject, an analogous fact, which has been noticed in the parrot, may here be mentioned. The young of the parrot, while still in the egg, presents a row of tubercles along the edge of the jaw, in external appearance exactly resembling the rudiments of teeth, but without being implanted into regular sockets in the maxillary bones: they are formed, however, by a process precisely similar to that of dentition; that is, by deposition from a vascular pulp, connected with the jaw. These tubercles are afterwards

* Vol. i. p. 186.

† Cuvier, *Ossemens Fossiles*, 3me edition, tom. v. p. 360.