

ternal organization approaches to that of the higher classes, for they exhibit the rudiments of a nervous system; their alimentary canal is simple; they have a branching dorsal vessel, but without a systole and diastole; their pharynx is usually furnished with mandibles, which are sometimes armed with teeth. The mouth of the majority, especially amongst the rotatories, is fringed with ray-like bristles, which Cuvier thinks are connected with their respiration. This circumstance of a circle of rays surrounding the oral orifice, is found in the polypes and several other animals of a higher grade. Their use in the present instance, I speak more particularly of the wheel-animalcules, is by their rotation to produce a current in the water to the mouth of the animal, bringing with it the still more minute beings which constitute its food.

These invisible inhabitants of the visible world created an early interest in inquisitive minds; Dr. Henry Power, and after him the celebrated Hooke, about the middle of the seventeenth century, or earlier, noticed what were called vinegar eels.* Sir E. King, in the "Philosophical Transactions," described some experiments on the animalcules found in pepper water; and, subsequently, Mr. Harris made observations upon a variety of these minute creatures. The subject was afterwards taken up by various writers, both here and on the continent. Amongst these none was more eminent than Spallanzani. O. F. Müller, who seems to have been the first who treated the subject systematically, embodied these animals in a class by the name of *Infusorics*.† He was followed by Bruguiere and Lamarck, who divided it into Orders and Sections. But the system of these zoologists has for the most part been set aside by Ehrenberg, a Prussian naturalist, before-mentioned, who devoted ten years of his life to the investigation of these

* *Vibrio Anguilla*.

† *Infusoria*.