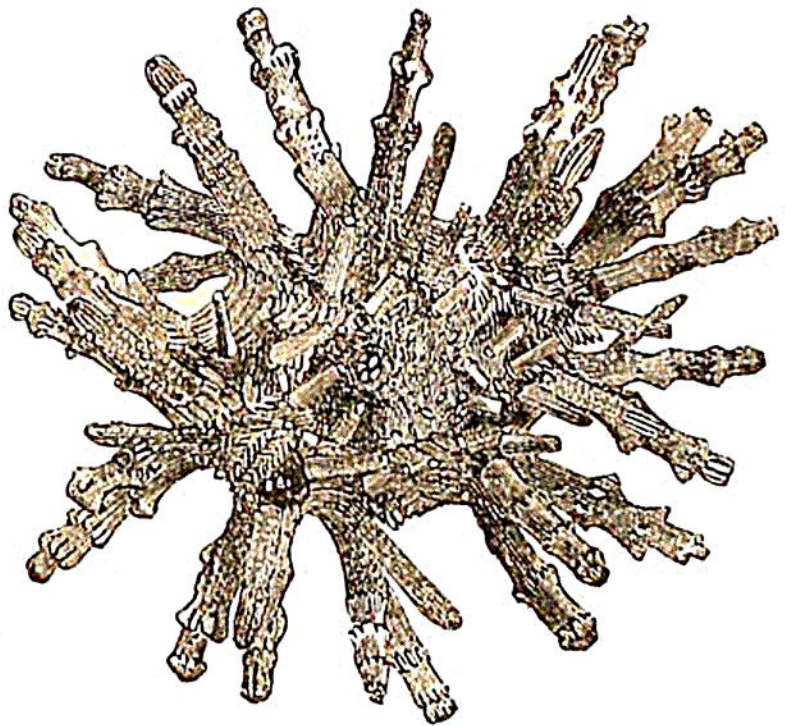


We may say, that in some sense the whales were created for the gelatinous radiaries and numberless other animals with which the seas frequented by these monsters abound, and that these gelatinous radiaries were created for the whales. The enormous mouth of the last-named animals is not armed with tusks or grinders, but fitted instead with vast numbers of oblique laminæ of a softer substance, usually denominated whalebone, which is adapted only for the

Fig. 15.

crushing and masticating of soft bodies; therefore, instead of a prey more proportioned to their bulk, they contentedly make their meal off these small but innumerable gelatines which, by their number, make up for their want of magnitude, and are exactly suited to the masticating organs of their devourer;



Echinus.

and though the waste of animal life seems almost infinite, yet was it not for this check, so great appear to be the powers of multiplication of the smaller creatures that swarm under the ice of the arctic seas, there would be more than could be maintained consistently with the general welfare.

The object of Providence throughout our globe, as has been before observed, is so to balance the respective numbers of the different kinds of animals, from the invisible monad to the gigantic whale, that a certain proportion may be preserved, with regard to their numbers, between them,