

We must next inquire what was the object of Him, who does nothing but with a view to some useful, though not always evident, end, in producing these miniature monsters of the deep, so wonderfully organized, and so unlike every other tribe of animals, in his creation, and yet containing in them, as we have seen, as it were, the elements, whether we ascend or descend, of all the rest. It appears from the united testimony of almost every writer that has noticed them, that they have it in charge to keep within due limits a tribe of animals almost equally destructive with themselves, and which are armed also with weapons of offence, apparently equally terrific to their prey. It will be readily perceived that I am speaking of the *Crustaceans*, and of the formidable pincers with which they seize their prey. It must be a curious spectacle to see one

of the larger poulpes attack a lobster; at first sight, we should think the latter most likely to master his assailant, covered as he is with a hard crust, and using adroitly his powerful forceps, we should feel sure that the cuttle-fish with his soft body and oral organs equally soft, stood no chance against such an antagonist. But He who gave him his commission has fitted him for the

execution of it; his soft tentacular organs will bend in every direction, and the numerous suckers wherewith they are planted, by pumping out the medium that forms the atmosphere of marine animals, produce such a pressure wherever they are fixed, that, struggle as it may, it cannot disengage itself from the grasp of its assailant; and, by their flexibility, these organs can imitate the fishermen, and tie together the

Fig. 47.

Extremities of long tentacula of
Onychoteuthis.

a. a. Suckers.