

their digitations, and employing their suckers, they can easily so manage as to prevent the escape of any animal included within the meshes of their net.

With regard to their functions, and what animals their Creator has given a charge to them to keep within due limits, little can be known by observation; as nothing like jaws has been discovered in them, in which they differ from the Cirripedes, it should seem that either their food must consist of animalcules that require no mastication, or, if they entrap larger animals, that they must suck their juices, which seems to be Mr. Miller's opinion.* This idea is rendered not improbable by the vast number of suckers by which their fingers, and their lateral branches or tentacles as they are called, are furnished; by these they can lay fast hold of any animal too powerful to be detained in their net by any other means, and subject it to the action of their proboscis.

From the great rarity of recent species of these animals, it should seem that the metropolis of their race is in the deepest abysses of the world of waters. "It appears," says Bosc,† "that the species were extremely numerous in the ancient world, perhaps those actually in existence are equally so, for I suspect that all inhabit the depths of the ocean, a place in which they may remain to eternity without being known to man."

Naturalists very often, too hastily, regard species as extinct that are now found only in a fossil state, forgetting that there may be many stations fitted for animal or vegetable life, that are still, and, perhaps, always will be inaccessible to the investigator of the works of the Creator, where those mourned over as for ever lost may be flourishing in health and vigour.

* Crinoïdea, 54.

† N. D. D'Hist. Nat. x. 224.