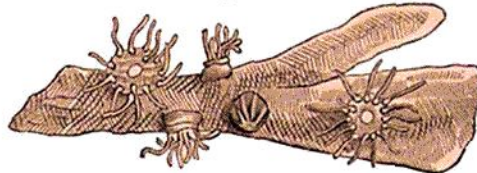


ing thus at a single litter. An embryo extracted artificially from the amputated tip of a tentaculum, began to breed in fourteen months, and survived nearly five years. Monstrosities by excess are not uncommon among the young: one produced naturally, consisting of two perfect bodies, and their parts sustained by a single base, exhibited embryos in the tentacula at ten months, bred in twelve, and lived above five years. While one body was gorged with food, the other continued ravenous.* These facts are to be explained on the supposition that the ova have been detained and developed in the interseptal spaces, for it is very well ascertained that the creatures are truly oviparous. The ovum, under ordinary circumstances, is recognizable as the young of an Actinia about twenty days from the

Fig. 34.



time of its separation. † It has at first very few tentacula,—from four to twelve, arranged in a single row, but they gradually germinate in greater numbers, and arrange themselves in two or more imperfect circular series; ‡—a fact which strikingly illustrates the futility of that classification which mainly rests the distinction of its genera upon the number of these circles. §

The Actiniæ are very patient of injuries, and rival the Hydra in their reproductive powers. They may be kept without food for upwards of a year; they may be immersed in water hot enough to blister their skin, or frozen in a mass of ice and again thawed; and they may be placed within the exhausted receiver of the air pump, without being deprived of life, or disabled from resuming their usual functions when placed in a favourable situation. If the tentacula are clipped off they soon begin to bud anew, and if again cut away they grow again, so that “it seems these reproductions might extend as far, or be as often repeated as patience and curiosity would admit.” If cut transversely through the middle, the lower portion of

* Rep. Brit. Assoc. an. 1834, p. 599; and Edin. New Phil. Journ. xvii. p. 411.

† Dalzell in Edin. New Phil. Journ. xxi. p. 89, 90.

‡ Dalzell in Edinburgh Encyclopædia, art. “Animal Flower,” p. 132. Templeton in Mag. Nat. Hist. ix. 303; and Harvey in *ibid.* n. s. i. p. 474.

§ Brandt. A Synopsis of his System is given by Blainville. Actinologie, p. 666.