

margins of the mouth over the mollusk or crab, until the whole is inclosed and passed into the digestive sac ; and when digestion is complete, the shell and any other refuse matters are easily got rid of by reversing the process.

But the Actinia owes nearly all its power of attack to its concealed weapons, which are carried by myriads. These are what Agassiz has called *lasso-cells*, because the little cell-shaped sheath contains a very long slender tubular thread coiled up, which can be darted out instantly when needed. As first observed by Agassiz, the tubular lasso escapes from the cell by turning itself inside out, the extremity showing itself last, and this is usually done "with lightning-like rapidity." Then follows the poison. The lasso-cells (called often *netting cells*, and by Gosse *cnidæ*, and *thread capsules*) are usually less than a 200th of an inch in length ; but they are thickly crowded in the larger part of the skin or walls of the tentacles, and about the mouth ; also in the walls of the stomach, and within the visceral cavity in white cords hanging in folds from the edge of the septa. Thus the polyp is armed inside and out. The mollusk or crab that has the ill luck to fall, or be thrown by the waves, on the surface of the pretty flower is at once pierced and poisoned by the minute lassos, and is rendered incapable of resistance.

The following figures, by Dr. Karl Mobius, of Hamburg, illustrate admirably these organs. The views are magnified 700 diameters. Figure 1 represents one of the lasso-cells of the Actinia, *Corynactis viridis*, with its lasso coiled up within ; its actual length is about a 350th of an inch. Figure 2 is the same with the lasso out, though less than half of the long thread is shown. Figure 3 is the lasso-cell of the polyps of a European coral, the *Caryophyllia Smithii*. It differs from figure 1 in having the basal part of the lasso within the cell or sheath strait and stout ; it is this part which makes the first portion of the extended lasso. A view of part of the latter is represented in figure 4, and of the extremity of the same in figure 5. The lasso-cells in the above species are from a 240th to a 360th of an inch in length. In the *Metridium margina-*