

served to keep the central mass floating, cradle-like, between them. The elastic threads, which held the ball of Gulf weed together, were beaded at intervals, sometimes two or three beads close together, or a bunch of them hanging from the same cluster of threads, or occasionally scattered at a greater distance from each other. Nowhere was there much regularity in the distribution of the beads. They were scattered pretty uniformly throughout the whole ball of sea-weed, and were themselves about the size of an ordinary pin's head. Evidently we had before us a nest of the most curious kind, full of eggs. What animal could have built this singular nest? It did not take long to ascertain the class to which it belonged. A common pocket lens revealed at once two large eyes on the side of the head, and a tail bent over the back of the body, as in the embryo of ordinary fishes shortly before the period of hatching. The many empty egg cases in the nest gave promise of an early opportunity of seeing some embryos, freeing themselves from their envelope. Meanwhile a number of these eggs containing live embryos were cut out of the nest and placed in separate glass jars, in order to multiply the chances of preserving them;