

individual animals are often so minute as to be scarcely visible without the aid of the microscope. Mere size, indeed, is of all the circumstances attendant on organized beings, that which should least be assumed as the criterion of complication or refinement of structure. An object is great or small, only in relation to the standard of our own limited and imperfect senses; but with reference to the operations of creative power, all such distinctions must vanish. There is not, as far as we have the means of judging, in the colossal fabric of the elephant, any structure more complicated than exists in the minutest insect that crawls unheeded at our feet.

### § 5. *Acalephæ.*

FLOATING masses of living gelatinous matter are met with in every part of the ocean; often in vast numbers, and of various forms; and having but little the appearance of belong-



81  
They compose the order *Acalephæ*, of which the *Medusa* (Fig. 81) may be taken as the type. They appear, from their organization, to be raised but a single step above polypi; and in point of activity and locomotive powers, they rank among the lowest of those Zoophytes which are not permanently fixed to the spot where they were first developed. They are almost wholly passive beings, floating on the

surface of the sea, or remaining at a small depth below it, carried to and fro by the motion of every tide and current, and destined to be the unresisting prey of innumerable tribes of animals which people every part of the ocean.

The usual form of a *Medusa* is that of a hemisphere, with