

shape, the same annular structure of the denser parts of its integument, the same arrangements of longitudinal and oblique muscles connecting these rings, the same apparatus of short feet, with claws, or bristles, or tufts of hairs, for facilitating progression; in short, all the circumstances most characteristic of the vermiform type are equally exemplified in the different tribes of caterpillars, as in the proper Annelida.

But these vermiform insects have this peculiarity, that they contain in their interior the rudiments of all the organs of the perfect insect. These organs, however, are concealed from view by a great number of membranous coverings, which successively invest one another, like the coats of an onion, and are thrown off, one after another, as the internal parts are gradually developed. These external investments, which hide the real form of the future animal, have been compared to a mask; so that the insect, while wearing this disguise, has been termed *larva*, which is the Latin name for a mask.

This operose mode of development is rendered necessary in consequence of the greater compactness of the integuments of insects, as compared with those of the annelida. In proportion as they acquire density, they are less capable of being farther stretched, and at length arrive at the limit of their possible growth. Then it is that they obstruct the dilatation of the internal organs, and must be thrown off to make way for the farther growth of the insect. In the mean time a new skin has been preparing underneath, moulded on a larger model, and admitting of greater extension than the one which preceded it. This new skin, at first, readily yields to the distending force from within, and a new impulse is given to the powers of development; until, becoming itself too rigid to be farther stretched, it must, in its turn, be cast off in order to give place to another skin. Such is the process which is repeated periodically, for a great number of times, before the larva has attained its full size.

These successive peelings of the skin are but so many