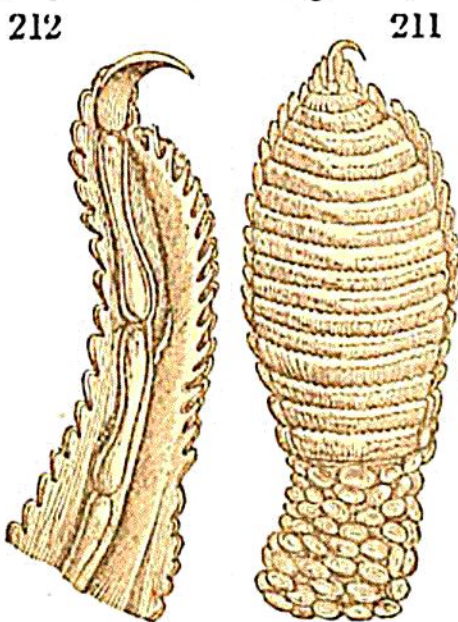


nearly to the corresponding parts of the skeleton of the higher orders of quadrupeds. The toes are usually provided with membranes spread between them, to assist in swimming. The form of the tail, which is generally compressed vertically, like that of fishes, though perhaps not to an equal degree, is another indication of their being formed for an aquatic life; for where the tail has this shape, we always find that the chief muscular power is bestowed upon it as an instrument of aquatic progression, producing, by its lateral flexions, a horizontal movement of the body. Crocodiles and alligators, for instance, which have this conformation, are comparatively weak when on land, and as soon as they have seized their prey, their efforts are always directed to drag it into the water; knowing that when in their own element they can readily master its struggles, and destroy it by drowning.

In the *Gecko* tribe, we find a particular mechanism provided for effecting the adhesion of the feet to the objects to which they are applied. It is somewhat analogous to that employed in the case of the house-fly, already mentioned. Each foot has five toes; all, except the thumb, terminated by a sharp curved claw. On the under surface of each toe (represented in Fig. 211) there are as many as sixteen trans-



verse slits, leading to the same number of cavities, or sacs; these open forwards, and their external edge is serrated, appearing like the teeth of a small-toothed comb. A section of the foot, showing these cavities, is seen in Fig. 212. All these parts, together with the cavities are covered or lined with cuticle. Below them are large muscles which draw down the claw; and from the tendons of these muscles arise two sets of smaller muscles,