

Annelides, &c. Upon organisms still so slightly differentiated external conditions act in a very energetic manner; and their action is multiplied by heredity in creatures with a free and dilated embryogeny. We must therefore keep watch against the apparent homologies which often mask real but yet only slightly marked differences of organization—"When we have to do with the starting-point of an angle, no modification in the divergence of the lines is indifferent."

Among those who will read the preceding pages there are some who will regard such researches as rash, as useless theories, or as facile dissertations; so great is even still the infatuation of certain naturalists for the exaggerations of the Cuvierian school, and for the ideal and artistic morphology of some of his successors. We have nothing to urge against those who persist, in contempt of embryogenic data, in seeking in adult forms for supposed homologies of connexion and an arbitrary plan determined beforehand. One cannot discuss matters with a partisan. To those who pretend that it is *easy* to reason upon known facts, and who prefer to seek and store up in their memoirs histological details and observations in descriptive anatomy, we say with Professor Hæckel:—"Whoever has good eyes and a microscope, assiduity, and patience may now-a-days acquire a certain notoriety by microscopical discoveries, but without therefore deserving the name of a naturalist. This title must be reserved for the man who endeavours not only to see the particular facts, but also to grasp their ethological bond."

IX.—*Observations on the Genus Platycrinus.*

By Fort-Major THOMAS AUSTIN, F.G.S.

HAVING for a long time remarked the anomaly of retaining in the genus *Platycrinus* those species which deviate from the typical character in having the mouth, or anal orifice, or whatever the office the aperture may have been intended to perform, placed *laterally* or nearly so, whereas the typical species and some others have the *centre* of the ventral dome elevated into a tube from one to two inches in height, it is therefore proposed to remove those species with *excentrical* apertures into a new genus, retaining *Platycrinus lævis* and all those with *probosciform central* tubes in the original genus.

By the proposed arrangement the two genera would stand in the following order.

PLATYCRINUS.

Platycrinus lævis.

—— *striatus*.

—— *elongatus*.

Platycrinus trigintidactylus.

—— *spinosus*.

The generic formula of *Platycrinus* would be as follows :— Central dorsal plate pentagonal, whole and undivided ; lateral or perisomatic plates five ; ventral dome or proboscisiform mouth(?) elevated, rising in the centre to a column of some considerable height.

The formula of the dorsal part of the proposed new genus resembles *Platycrinus* in the number of lateral plates, but in shape they are somewhat different. The upper or ventral surface, however, is quite dissimilar, and presents a striking contrast to the elevated ventral elongated cone of *Platycrinus*— it being covered in with four, five, or more plates which are only slightly elevated above the upper margin of the perisomatic or lateral dorsal plates, while the mouth, anal orifice, or whatever its office may have been, is situated in the widest interradian space, and it is mostly on a level with the base of the arms, but never in the centre of the dome, and it could have been but slightly protruding.

It is proposed provisionally to name the new genus MEDUSACRINUS ; and it contains the following species :—

Medusacrinus mucronatus.

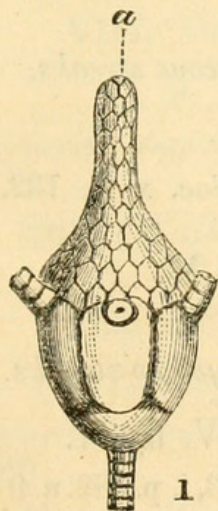
—— *rugosus*.

—— *tuberculatus*.

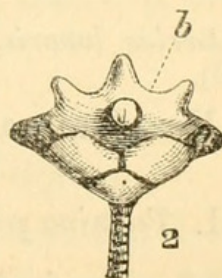
Medusacrinus mammillatus.

—— *granulatus*.

The accompanying drawings of a specimen of each genus will convey a better idea of their characters than any written description. In each case they are represented without arms.



Platycrinus lævis.
a. Anal or oral tube.



Medusacrinus mucronatus.
b. Mouth or anal orifice.



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