

struments and more careful research. Another statement, however, of much higher pretensions, has lately been made, and on no mean authority. Able electricians declare that by passing currents of galvanism through solutions of silicate or ferrocyanate of potassa, or some analogous substance after a time, sometimes several years, numerous small insects have been developed, belonging to the *acari* family.

These experiments appear to have been conducted with fairness and skill; and that the insects showed themselves at the pole of the battery, around which the gelatinous silex collected, cannot be doubted. It is true, however, that, when the solution was exposed to the atmosphere, the insects appeared much sooner and more numerous than when care was taken to exclude every thing but oxygen enough to sustain life. This fact leads to the suspicion that the ova of the insect might have been communicated through the air, and that even when an attempt was made to exclude the atmosphere, some ova were still present. This conclusion is rendered still more probable by some experiments made by Professor Schulz, of Berlin, on the production of the infusoria. Having first boiled the vegetable and animal infusions, so as to destroy all germs of organic life, and expelled all the atmosphere, he attached an apparatus in such a manner that whatever air entered afterwards must pass through sulphuric acid, or a solution of potash. The result was that no infusoria or vegetable forms appeared during two months; but in the same infusion, placed in the open air, and exposed to the same light and heat as that enclosed in the glass vessel, numerous animalcula and fungi appeared in a day or two. It will need, therefore, very long and patient experiments to establish the assertion that galvanism alone can produce living animals without the presence of germs.

Not many years since, the equivocal or casual production of animalcula, without any other parentage than law, was thought to be made out by a multitude of facts. For these minute creatures appeared almost every where, and in places where it seemed impossible that their ova should be found. But the researches of Ehrenberg have cleared up the difficulties of their origination in the ordinary modes of reproduction, in nearly every instance, and the advocates of the law hypothesis have been fairly driven from this stronghold of their argument. In