

fixed they soon undergo considerable alteration. The tail, which was previously employed for locomotion, is now useless, falls off, and the animal surrounds itself with a mucous substance, in which it remains nearly motionless, like the caterpillar on its transformation into the Pupa. If, however, after some time, we remove the little animal from its retreat, we find it to be no longer a Cercaria, but an intestinal worm, called Distoma, having the shape of Fig. 138, with two suckers. The Distoma, therefore, is only a particular state of the Cercaria, or, rather, the Cercaria is only the larva of the Distoma.

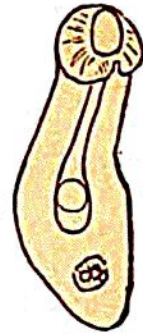


Fig. 138.

340. What now is the origin of the Cercaria? The following are the results of the latest researches on this point. At certain periods of the year, we find in the viscera of the Limnea (one of the most common fresh-water mollusks) a quantity of little worms of an elongated form, with a well marked head, and two posterior projections like limbs, (Fig. 139.) On examining these worms attentively, under the microscope, we discover that the cavity of their body is filled by a mass of other little worms, which a practised eye easily recognizes as young Cercariæ, the tail and the characteristic furcated organ (*a*) within it being distinctly visible, (Fig. 140.) These little embryos increase in size, distending the worm which contains them, and which seemingly has no other office than to protect and forward the development of the young Cercaria. It is, as it were, their living envelop. On this account, it has been called the *nurse*.

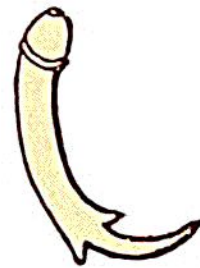


Fig. 139.

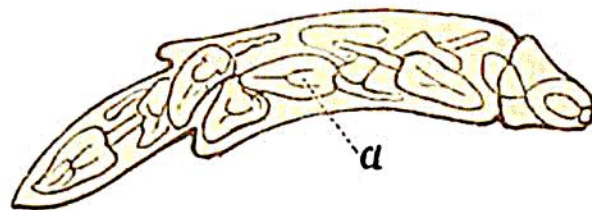


Fig. 140.