

of three different classes, namely, the Hood-jellies (Hydromedusæ), the Comb-jellies (Ctenophora), and the Corals (Coralla). The hypothetical, extinct Archydra must be looked upon as the common primary form of the whole group; it has left two near relations in the still living fresh-water polyps (Hydra and Cordylophora). The Archydra was very closely related to the simplest forms of Spongiæ (Archispongia and Olynthus), and probably differed from them only by possessing nettle organs, and by the absence of cutaneous pores. Out of the Archydra there first developed the different Hydroid polyps, some of which became the primary forms of Corals, others the primary forms of Hydromedusæ. The Ctenophora developed later out of a branch of the latter.

The Sea-nettles differ from the Spongiæ (with which they agree in the characteristic formation of the system of the alimentary canal) principally by the constant possession of nettle organs. These are small bladders filled with poison, large numbers—generally millions—of which are dispersed over the skin of the sea nettles, and which burst and empty their contents when touched. Small animals are killed by this; in larger animals this nettle poison causes a slight inflammation of the skin, just as does the poison of our common nettles. Any one who has often bathed in the sea, will probably have at times come in contact with large Hood-jellies (Jelly-fish), and become acquainted with the unpleasant burning feeling which their nettle organs can produce. The poison in the splendid blue Jelly-fish, Physalia, or Portuguese Man-of-war, acts so powerfully that it may lead to the death of a human being.

The class of Corals (Coralla) lives exclusively in the sea,