

A REVIEW

OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF CRUSTACEA, WITH REFERENCE TO CERTAIN PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION.

THE class Crustacea exhibits a clearness of outline in its types, and a display of relations, transitions, and distinctions, among its several groups, exceeding any other department of the animal kingdom. This fact arises from the very great range in structure occupied by the species. The limits in size exceed those of any other class, exclusive of the Radiata; the length varying from nearly two feet to a small fraction of a line, the largest exceeding the smallest lineally more than a thousand-fold. In the structure of the limbs, the diversity is most surprising, for even the jaws of one division may be the only legs of another; the number of pairs of legs may vary from fifty to one, or none. The antennæ may be either simple organs of sense or organs of locomotion and prehension; and the joints of the body may be widely various in number and form. In the branchial and the internal systems of structure, the variety is equally remarkable; for there may be large branchiæ, or none; a heart, or none; a system of distinct arterial vessels, or none; a pair of large liver glands, or but rudiments of them; a series of ganglions in the nervous cord, or but one ganglion for the whole body.

Taking even a single natural group, the Decapods;—the abdomen may be very small, without appendages, and flexed beneath the broad cephalothorax out of view, or it may be far the larger part of the body, and furnished with several pairs of large natatory appendages;