



THE HERMIT CRAB.

THE HERMIT-CRAB.



SOLD BY THE DOCTORS' COMPANIES

W. DICKES, SC.

Page 12.

Genii ... appeared to be clothing him in the warrior's mail.

THE HERMIT-CRAB:

ITS HISTORY AND ADVENTURES;

OR THE

PILGRIMAGE OF PAGURUS BERNHARDUS.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "WOODSORREL."

LONDON:

WARD AND LOCK, FLEET STREET.

1858.

LONDON :

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

THE HERMIT-CRAB.

Chapter the First.

THE EARLY LIFE OF PAGURUS.

“ ’Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years ;
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life’s labyrinth holds fast the clue
That education gives her, false or true.”

COWPER.

It was a calm night in early summer, and all in the air and on the earth seemed to be at rest and peace. The eagle had sought his nest in the high rock, and the bee had gone to her waxen cell till flowers should unfold their bright petals to the light of another day. The tiny Vorticella, millions and millions of which were crowded into one drop

of stagnant water, withdrew their fragile cilia, and coiled up their spiral stems, and slept a short and dreamless sleep. All was peaceful in earth and air, and so also in the deep deep sea, save where a vessel moved slowly over the broad expanse of waters, and as it passed through the wavelets, thousands of *Acalephæ* and *Pyrosomæ* were startled from their slumbers, and donned their armour of fire, till the wake of the ship became one track of living light, like the pathway of an angel. But alas ! there are some whose sorrowful and burdened hearts can find no joy in the sunniest day, nor repose in the calmest night ; and of such was the hero of our story—the far-famed *Pagurus*.

Pagurus had never known a father's watchful care, a mother's devoted and unselfish love. The lark will stoop from her rejoicing flight towards the sun to tend her nestlings in their low grassy hiding-place. The ostrich spreads his broad wings over his eggs in the desert sand. The *Bulimi*, beneath the burning skies of the tropics, cement cool leaves together to form a protection for their large bird-like eggs.

The purple *Ianthina* fastens hers to a floating raft, and the Argonaut carries them in her frail boat, whilst the river Mussel and the Cyclas nurse their young in their own mantle till they are strong enough to shift for themselves;* but the Hermit-Crab takes no great thought for his offspring, and from the first moment of consciousness Pagurus was dependent upon his own exertions for sustenance and defence, and was left to pick up a scanty stock of learning as best he might.

Few records have been preserved of his infancy and early childhood. He was an expert swimmer, possessing great physical activity, quick of eye, and quick of limb, and already exhibiting tokens of that irascible temperament and reckless courage which characterised him in after life. He does not seem to have evinced any taste for the sublime and beautiful in nature, or it would scarcely have failed to be developed amidst the magnificent scenery by which he was surrounded. Submarine forests of vast extent, offering every variety of form and foliage ;

* See Woodward's "Manual of the Mollusca," part i., p. 20.

mountains, and valleys, and rocks, some thickly inhabited, and other portions consisting of still unappropriated territory ; gardens, whose rich crimson parterres of *Delesseria* rivalled in beauty the roses of Damascus—all these were familiar to his gaze, but their grandeur and loveliness seem to have awakened no response of admiration in his mind. Yet there was no lack of acuteness and power in his composition. He would have gained a prize among the ancient Spartans or the modern Esquimaux for audacious and successful thefts, and the whole art of war seemed to be grasped by him as intuitively as by the great Bonaparte himself. Pity indeed it was for *Pagurus Bernhardus* that the cultivation of his heart, and mind, and manners, was alike neglected ; and if we find much in his history to condemn, let us remember that Oliver Twist was not less indebted than himself to early training, and that no Lord Shaftesbury had arisen among the Crustacea to establish Ragged Schools and Reformatories for the destitute *Zoea*.*

* The *Zoea* were formerly ranked as a distinct genus, and

Pagurus was not, however, wholly without warning or exhortation. It chanced that two worthy marine ladies, like those to whom Llangollen owes so much of its fame, had conceived a strong affection for each other, and agreed to take each other "for better, for worse." Bound indeed they were, and that by more silken bonds than those perchance of Hymen always prove : for, dreading lest aught should come between them to separate or estrange, the Lady Lima and her fair friend, Miss Tulipa Modiola, had constructed a fairy grotto for their dwelling-place in a porphyra-covered rock, and then each had spun a glossy chain, and voluntarily tethered herself, side by side, with her beloved to the unyielding stone.*

Happy in each other, their kindly feelings expressed in a different order of Crustacea, far apart from the Crab family ; but it has been recently discovered, and placed beyond a doubt by careful observation, that they are really only the young specimens of *Cancer major*, though bearing no resemblance to the animal in its mature state.

* The Lima and the Modiola both spin silken nests, or form deep burrows ; many of them attach themselves to rocks by a byssus, as do also the *Mytilus* and the *Pinna*.

tended to all around them, and more especially to the young.

Scandal, indeed, whispered that they were not so disinterested as they appeared ; that youthful Molluscs and Crustacea, once admitted to their grot, re-appeared no more. Scandal whispered—perhaps it is scarcely right to repeat it, and we do so with many qualms of conscience, lest we should seem to countenance such a horrible report—scandal did whisper, that the ladies had voracious appetites, and that they loved animal food. Enough of this : it is an evil world we live in !

One day, Pagurus had been engaged in a skirmish near “the purple rock,” as it was popularly called. As usual, he had been the aggressor, and was victorious. His foe had just fled, severely wounded, and he was about to follow in pursuit, when he was arrested by the gentle voice of the Lady Lima, who had been a spectator of the combat from her fairy bower. He might well stop to listen, for her aspect was eminently attractive. Her outer robe, albeit of shell, instead of the flimsy material worn

by ladies of the genus homo, was yet of the purest and most delicate white. It was unclasped, and revealed an inner garment of rich crimson, over which was partially thrown a mantle of orange, richly fringed. Her dark, star-like eyes were fixed upon him with pitying solicitude, as she earnestly besought him to turn from his wild and vagrant life, even offering to receive him into her own household, and assuring him that, once ensconced in her bower, he would never wish to roam again. Pagurus heard her with a courteous deference, compelled by her beauty and eloquence; but the organ of combativeness had been already strongly developed, his penchant for a free and wandering life, his yearnings for military exploits and military glory, all combined to render the prospect of a quiet and monotonous course utterly distasteful to him. One moment he hesitated; the next he swam away;—had he listened to the voice of the charmer this history had never been written.

That night “a change came o’er the spirit of the dream.” With a vague, strange mixture of terror

and delight, Pagurus felt himself undergoing one of those extraordinary metamorphoses to which the Paguri, and probably all the higher Crustacea, are liable.* Genii, shadowy and dimly visible, appeared to be clothing him in the warrior's mail, and girding him with the warrior's arms ; his head was covered with a helmet, his body with a shield ; but, cased though he was in armour, there was yet one part of his body left undefended by mail or weapon. Alas ! even Achilles was vulnerable in the heel, and our hero was so in the tail, though he was too much astonished and bewildered to be immediately conscious of this important defect. That night

* When first hatched, the young of the Crab presents a singularly grotesque appearance. It has a helmet-shaped head, terminating behind in a long horn, and furnished in front with a pair of huge sessile eyes, and it moves through the water by means of its long swimming tail. After the first change of skin, the body assumes something of its permanent shape, the eyes become stalked, the claws are developed, and the legs resemble those of the Crab ; but the change is still incomplete, for the tail is still long, and furnished with false feet like those of a lobster. The swimming habit has not yet been laid aside. At the next stage the crab-form is completed, and all the subsequent changes are merely changes of coat.

(See HARVEY'S *Sea-Side Book*, p. 166.)

was his first wakeful one ; he thought, whilst others slept. A new era in his existence was commencing.

Who does not retain a vivid remembrance of that moment when he awoke to the sudden consciousness that the first period of his life had passed away ; that childhood, with its gay and careless glee was gone, and could return no more for ever, and his thoughts grew sad and solemn, like the muffled peal which chimes the old year's parting ; though soon, with youth's high hopes and bounding aspirations, changing even as those tuneful bells to glad strains of welcome to the flower-decked future.

Chapter the Second.



PAGURUS A SOLDIER.

“Stern power of arms, by whom the mighty fall ;
Who bath’st in blood, and shak’st the embattled wall.”

Iliad, book 5.

MORNING shone dimly through the depth of ocean, and with proud wonder and exultation, Pagurus beheld his own image reflected in the water. It is always pleasant to be regarded with complacency, if by no other eyes than our own ; and for once Pagurus shook hands with himself, and gave it as his decided opinion that he was a very good-looking fellow. Fine head, athletic form, sharp strong claws, he certainly possessed ; in short, everything that could be desired, except that his tail was destitute of armour—indeed, totally uncovered. It had lost much of its length in the late

transformation, but there was quite enough of it still left to cause him some anxiety, and he was not long in coming to the conclusion that he must endeavour to secure it from injury by some means or other.

Glancing around he saw another of the young Paguri, who was in the same plight as himself, advancing steadily towards the empty shell of a defunct *Murex despectus*.

In a moment the thought struck him that this was exactly such a covering as he required, and without delay he strode hastily along, aiming, if possible, to reach the shell before his rival. The race became every second more exciting. Sometimes one was in advance, sometimes the other; but both reached the coveted prize at the same moment, and each claimed the right to take possession. The altercation was brief; words of fierce defiance were followed by yet fiercer blows.

“ Herminius smote Mamilius

Through breast-plate and through breast;
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.”

It was a short and bloody contest, and Pagurus did not escape entirely uninjured. His antagonist, pierced with many wounds, lay dead before him. All his previous encounters sank into insignificance compared with this knightly passage of arms, for his foe was larger and stronger than himself, and he had gained the victory by sheer courage and skill. Some little time he stood to breathe, and recover from the desperate duel in which he had been engaged ; then he hastened to possess himself of the treasure which was now doubly precious in his sight, as are all things which have cost us toil and time, and for which we have endangered life and limb. In truth, it was a beautiful shell, and most admirably suited to his convenience, and he concluded with, perhaps, pardonable self-importance, that it must have been expressly made for him, which it certainly was not. Of its previous history he was in profound ignorance. We, however, are better informed ; for we learn from the most undoubted authority—authority, whose veracity must stand unchallenged to the end of time—that its

builder and earliest inhabitant was not altogether a respectable character. Indeed, if we must speak in plain unvarnished language, he was a common housebreaker, boring holes in other people's shells with his amber-coloured, glossy, and translucent teeth, which were strong as a file, and flinty as the rock. Most likely he had died a felon's death, and it was perhaps a sort of retribution that his dwelling, with its curious and ornamental architecture, and quaint doorway of pointed Gothic, should now be inhabited by one who would probably have killed him to obtain it, had he not had the fortune to be killed beforehand. Perchance this is a needless digression ; but we naturally speculate about those who have lived in our houses before we inhabited them ourselves, and there are few which do not possess some interest, though all may not be so rich in historical associations as Holyrood and Chillon, not to mention Newgate and the Tower of London. As we have before stated, Pagurus found room enough and to spare in his domicile. He attached himself by his tail, which was fur-

nished with two hook-like appendages, well adapted for the purpose, to the topmost whorl of the spire, and thus easily carried his house, as the *Helix* does, and as the Crimean soldier ought to have done, along with him wherever he went. If he was often looking out at the front door, like a London lacquey, small shame to him for that same ; there was an attraction—but more of that anon. Settled thus entirely to his satisfaction, he betook himself with all speed once more to the scene of his late encounter. There lay the fallen foe, weltering in his blood. Did *Pagurus* wish then to perform for him the last sad rites ? Would he make a grave for him amid the dark-brown foliage of the waving *Desmarestia*, or lay him, with funeral honours, on a soft couch of rainbow-hued *Cystoseira*, shadowed by feathery plumes of purple *Ceramium* ?

No such thing ! Yes, most gentle and refined ladies, maiden and married, who read these pages, call in the aid of sal-volatile and hartshorn, whilst we break to you, as tenderly as we can, the horrible fact that *Pagurus* devoured the mangled remains

of his former adversary. It was doubtless very shocking, and we fear, excepting in the opinion of some great economists, it will be but little extenuation to state that Pagurus thought it a pity good food should be wasted, and remarked that it would be mere folly in him to be sentimental and starve in the midst of plenty ; so he made a good meal of it, and was all the fatter, and very much pleased with himself, like the New Zealander of a hundred years back, and the Mexican of still older date after a similar banquet. And how truly he had need of strength ! His fighting days had come in earnest ; scarcely ever did the morning light gleam through the waters without rousing him to some dread encounter ; and in the darkest hour of night he could not lay aside his armour, or sleep, except with one eye open, so incessant were the attacks of his foes. He had provoked their animosity to the utmost, and little he cared, for his very element was warfare, and he fought as often for the pleasure of fighting, as for any more specious and dignified reason. Soon his fame spread far

and wide. The terror of his name had a magic power.

Many a baby Pecten and infant Trochus was hushed into good behaviour by the mother's threat that "Pagurus would come and take him if he was naughty." He was a Crustacean Cœur de Lion, the dread of the Saracens. There were, moreover, other points of resemblance between Pagurus and the brave Plantagenet besides that of courage, but their fate was widely different in one respect. Pagurus met with a faithful ally who, in peace and war, prosperity and adversity, proved equally true. Will any one be surprised to learn that this ally was a lady? And wherefore? Has Louis Napoleon a more faithful and esteemed ally than our own beloved Queen?

So thus it happened. Pagurus had tenanted the Murex shell only a short time, when he saw a lovely Sea Anemone advancing towards him. She glided along with slow and languid grace, her movements at times being scarcely perceptible. Occasionally, however, she varied her method of progression by

using her tentacula as feet ;* or again, by inflating her body with water, so as to become extremely buoyant, and then idly yielding herself to the random motion of the waves. He had full leisure to observe her minutely ere she chose to appear conscious of his proximity ; for though she fully intended to enter into a treaty of amity with him, and conclude an alliance offensive and defensive, and indeed was approaching him with this very object, she possessed sufficient diplomatic skill to veil her real intentions under an appearance of innocence and indifference. Her air of easy simplicity might not be very genuine, but at least it was very charming, and she was extremely pretty. Pagurus saw that with a glance. Her complexion, though not perhaps equal to that of the dame of Kilkenny, whose

“ Cheeks were like roses, her lips were the same,
Like a dish of fresh strawberries smothered in crame,”

* The Actiniæ can loose their hold and remove to another place whenever it pleases them, by either of the three methods of progression here described, but the first is their most usual

was yet very fair and lovely—the blue veins distinctly visible through the transparent skin ; and her slender tentacula, snowy white, were each marked with a faint tinge of brown.

Now, if any one supposes we are going to narrate some pathetic love passage in the life of our hero, he or she is quite wide of the mark ; there was no love at all in the case, though Pagurus yielded to the natural impulse of a gallant soldier, and determined to advance and bow his acknowledgment of the lady's beauty and supposed merit.

But, alas, for the abiding consequences of a neglected education ! He had never had any one to correct any little *gaucherie*, such as we are all apt to fall into in childhood ; and a singularly awkward gait was one of the many defects which Pagurus owed to this want of careful training in early life. He shuffled along sideways, very earnest, no doubt, but inelegant and ungraceful ; and, what

movement. The *Actinia maculata* is constantly found investing the shells tenanted by the Hermit-Crab—probably they aid each other in various ways, though this is not yet ascertained. Forbes says that it changes its habitation according to its size.

was worse in his case, with a decidedly unmilitary air. The Anemone hesitated, but she wisely considered that a man may fish well, hunt well, and fight well, who has never been under the tuition of the drill-sergeant ; and then, his shell would be very convenient to her. So they met and debated matters, and it was decided that the Anemone should occupy the outside of the shell, whilst Pagurus retained possession of the interior, that whatsoever prey was grasped by the hundred hands of the lady should be shared by Pagurus, and in return some portions of his battle-spoils should be spared for her ; and, to the credit of both be it spoken, there was no infraction of the treaty by either party ; and besides, they held many interesting conversations. This we obscurely hinted at when we admitted that Pagurus was frequently seen at the front-door of his dwelling.

Time passed on ; Pagurus increased exceedingly in prowess and fame ; he increased also in size, and his armour became uncomfortably small. At last the pressure and confinement were more than he

could bear. He felt that some great change was drawing near, and a dim memory awoke within him of the various transformations through which he had formerly passed. Could he indeed be approaching another metamorphosis? Instinctively he sought a close and well secured retreat under a large stone, and there he remained, passive, inert,—how changed! He did not care to eat or drink, or hunt or fight; he lay motionless and torpid. Suddenly, as if convulsed, he threw himself on his back; every limb trembled, every feeler was agitated violently; his body swelled to unusual dimensions, and at last his armour began to divide at the various junctures, and the whole of his breastplate and helmet were thrown off, and with these,—marvellous fact!—Pagurus parted with his old stomach too! What would not some dyspeptic Anglo-Indian give if he might do likewise, on the same condition of having new organs of digestion granted to him to replace the old worn-out apparatus?

Another effort and Pagurus had succeeded in loosening the armour from his limbs and kicking it

off, but the exertion had been so great that for hours he lay too weak and enfeebled to move; and for days afterwards he would have been an easy prey to Cod, or Ray, or Dogfish, had he not been safely sheltered in his secluded retirement. At length the genii of the deep arrayed him once more in warrior's mail, suited to his increased bulk, and proudly he left his retreat to mix again in the world, and prosecute his schemes of war and glory.

But ere he finally left the spot where the late occurrences had taken place, his appetite, voracious from long fasting, impelled him to the commission of a deed scarcely fit to be whispered to ears polite, —nevertheless it must be told—Pagurus devoured with the greatest avidity his own old stomach! * We will not dwell upon it, only we may just hint that sometimes a child has been known to bite his own nails, and that, when they were still a portion of himself, not cast-off débris, like the stomach in

* The first object which tempts the gluttony of the crab, when recovering from its change of shell, is its own stomach, from which it was lately disengaged.

question. Meanwhile the fair *Maculata* was calm as ever, not living quite so well as usual, but making shift to forage for herself as she could, and quite ready to do full justice to the first dainty presented to her by her friend *Bernhardus*. It is a common saying that "one new thing wants another," and *Pagurus* found the axiom a true one; his old shell seemed out of character with his present armour, and out of proportion too, now that his size was so wonderfully increased. And the long and the short of it was, that he must have a larger and handsomer one from some quarter, and that as speedily as it could be obtained.

He was too wary, however, to leave his old house before he had secured another. He knew that he could not easily procure apartments in any occupied dwelling, although many of the *Mollusca* do take in lodgers; the whelk for instance frequently has a thin wiry *Annelide*, like a poor poet, living in his attic storey, but a *Hermit-Crab* is not considered exactly a safe inmate, and most likely any applica-

tion he might make for lodgings would meet with a peremptory refusal.

Pagurus shuffled about for some time before he spied a shell which looked as if it would fit him comfortably. At last he perceived one which appeared perfectly *comme il faut*, but on a closer examination, it proved to be already inhabited, not by an adventurer like himself, but by its rightful proprietor. He was not scrupulous overmuch. He stood still and waited his opportunity. Presently the Buccinum pushed open his strong door, slowly and cautiously at first, then seeing no danger he ventured to walk out a few paces. In a moment Pagurus dashed upon him, held him fast in his terrible grasp, dragged him out of his shell, crushed him, killed him, and had half devoured him when he was attacked himself suddenly and fiercely from behind by a young member of the corps Cancer major. Pagurus faced round, and for an instant the two surveyed each other.

Like the heroes in Ossian, "they met in their clanging arms. Dreadful shone they to the light,

like the fall of the stream of Brumo when the meteor lights it before the mighty stranger." Terrible was the battle, but Pagurus was once more victorious, though the issue of the contest would have been somewhat doubtful had not Maculata given him ready and effectual aid. She struck into the foe with her numberless tentacula, entangled him, and finally sucked him into her pretty mouth, and swallowed him by way of putting him in prison. Pagurus now took possession of the Buccinum shell, but his triumph was much diminished by the injuries he had sustained ; indeed, on examination, one limb was found to be so seriously wounded that amputation was absolutely necessary to prevent his bleeding to death. He was his own surgeon, and performed the operation himself as he had frequently seen it performed by those skilful operators, the Comatulæ. As soon as the leg was completely severed, Pagurus discharged a certain mucus, or jelly, on the remaining part of the joint next the body, which, being a natural styptic, immediately stopped the bleeding, and in a compara-

tively short time he was perfectly sound, and had the satisfaction of perceiving that a new leg, which promised to be a very handsome, well-proportioned limb, was growing from the old root.

Maculata had remained for a time on the old shell, but she missed the pleasant companionship, and, yet more, the profitable alliance with Pagurus; and, finally, she determined to remove, and was soon settled with all her appurtenances in a snug porch built by herself around the door of the new dwelling.

So the old house was "to let;" but it was wonderfully soon re-tenanted without the intervention of a house-agent.

The next few years of the life of Pagurus were only a repetition of these first months of his manhood. Every autumn he resorted to some quiet retreat, either beneath a large stone, or in the cavities of some friendly rock—there dropped his soiled and worn-out armour, and came forth re-equipped.

Battles, stern and bloody, in which, though generally victorious, he was often wounded, filled up the tale of this eventful period. He had obtained glory and renown—his reputation was at the highest point. Yet at heart he was weary and dissatisfied, longing ever for some fresh excitement, and perhaps conscious in his secret soul of remorse for the harm he had caused, and the fearful destruction of mollusc life, occasioned by the wars in which he had indulged. His restlessness and melancholy at length reached such a climax, that on the night referred to at the commencement of our story, he came to the determination to abandon the country which had been the theatre of his military exploits, and where he had gained unfading laurels ; and, forgetting his dreams of high ambition, and his prospects of wide dominion, set forth on a long and painful pilgrimage, if so, he might regain peace of mind and lightness of heart.

But ere we enter on this portion of his history, we must crave permission to touch briefly upon

circumstances which, though occurring at a period long antecedent, will explain in some sort the step resolved on by our hero. We shall reserve these particulars for a succeeding chapter.

Chapter the Third.

PAGURUS A PILGRIM.

“ A silly man, in simple weeds foreworne,
And soild with dust of the long dried way ;
His sandales were with toilsome travelles torne,
And face all tand with scorching sunny ray,
As he had traveiled many a summer's day
Through boyling sands of Arabie and Inde ;
And in his hand a Jacob's staffe, to stay
His weary limbs upon ; and eke behind
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.”

Faerie Queene.

FAR away in distant seas where submarine forests of Lessonia and Darvillæ wave their strong branches, each tipped with pendant foliage of gigantic size,—far away in these remote depths was a rock, ages ago colonised by the Gasteropoda ; and, by a right of first occupation and long possession their own inalienable territory. Hordes of fierce barbarians—

the well known and much dreaded *Sepia officinalis* had, however, laid claim to the rock, and so sorely harassed the inhabitants as to threaten their utter extermination.* The siege was closely pressed, and the defence gallant as that of Malta by the redoubtable Knights of St. John; but at length it was impossible to hold out longer against the armed legions of the foe, and after a fearful struggle the various towns were taken and the fortresses dismantled, and only a few of the wretched inhabitants escaped the general slaughter. There was no submarine telegraph, or oceanic penny postage in those days, yet the tidings of these atrocities spread far and wide through the ocean, and excited general indignation and pity amongst the numerous tribes of the Conchacea, Crustacea, and Gasteropoda. Everywhere the refugees were received with open arms, and their tale was listened to with unbounded sympathy. They performed all their

* The appetite of the Cuttlefish is so voracious that it seizes every living thing which it has the power to conquer. It is a very powerful animal, and when attacked in its own element it has been known capable of overcoming a powerful mastiff.

journeys on foot,* but doubtless had they indulged in equestrian travelling, as Peter the Hermit occasionally did, it might have been recorded of them as it is of him, that the very hairs which fell from his mule were treasured up as precious and inestimable relics, so great was the veneration with which they were regarded.† Various projects were formed for the recovery of the rock from the hands of the usurpers. Crusades were undertaken. The first of these, consisting chiefly of young and ignorant Molluscs, and bands of the Crustacea, altogether raw and inexperienced, met with a similar fate to that which befell the hosts led erewhile by Walter the Penniless across the plains of Bulgaria—never reaching their destination, but perishing on the way by war or famine. Armies followed, numerous, indeed, but composed of such heterogeneous materials that fierce quarrels speedily arose, and the arms of the Crusaders were turned

* In the Gasteropoda the under side of the body forms a single muscular foot, on which the animal creeps or glides.

† Museum Italicum, vol. i., p. 131.

against each other, instead of being reserved to combat the common enemy.

It is not our present purpose to enter into the history of these expeditions ; suffice it to say, that the Sepiæ were never wholly dislodged from their usurped territory, and in process of time the passion for crusading died away. Pilgrimages to the tombs of those who fell in the good cause were, however, long afterwards considered meritorious ; and even down to a very recent period they were not altogether abandoned, though the name of Pagurus is, perhaps, the latest one of renown in the long list of pilgrims.

The perils and dangers to be encountered had no power to deter Pagurus from entering at once upon his enterprise ; and, having ascertained that Maculata was willing to accompany him, he set out immediately—only communicating his resolution to a single friend. The individual thus honoured with his confidence was no other than Mitra episcopalis, an ecclesiastic of high rank and reputation, descended in a direct line from a

refugee family of great consideration among the Gasteropoda.

It has been our distinguished lot, among other high privileges, to have seen a veritable portrait of the revered Mitra ; and we can record our humble attestation to the fact, that his proboscis was unusually long, though his appearance was not in other respects remarkable. He highly applauded Pagurus's determination, and gave him such directions as he thought might be of use to him ; and then bade him a long farewell.

Bernhardus had not now the peculiarly rapid powers of locomotion which he had possessed in childhood, and his shuffling and uncertain gait gave promise of but tardy progress ; yet in process of time he had passed the boundaries of his own country, and the neighbouring kingdoms, where, in other days, he had frequently spread terror and desolation. As he entered on the confines of a new territory, he was met by a train of Salpæ, whose carved and crystal-like tubes numerous small Crustacea had confiscated to their own use.

Very lazy and luxurious these intruders looked, lolling in their neighbours' carriages.* Pagurus, quickly alive to any wrong done by others, was exceedingly indignant with this appropriation of the Salpæ tubes. The trifling circumstance that he had himself, time after time, taken possession of the shells of other Molluscs, and not only deprived the owners of their dwellings, but of life itself, was entirely overlooked by him; and, with great wrath, he dashed into the midst of the Salpæ chain, overturning many of the tubes, and dislodging the interlopers, it is true, but at the same time separating the members of the link from each other, to their great inconvenience and danger.

Thus, in his indignation against tyranny, he did more harm than the tyrants themselves. Whereupon, the Anemone, who had come to the porch door in a great bustle, remarked, "that zeal is a good thing when it is tempered with discretion, and that before we take up other people's quarrels we

* For an interesting account of the Salpidæ see "History of British Mollusca," by Forbes and Henly, vol. i., p. 47.

had better ascertain whether they wish for our championship."

Then she told him a story she had somewhere heard, about a Crustacean, who intruded himself into the mouth of the American Alewife, or Old-wife, a fish very similar to a herring.*

The impertinent creature fastened himself to the palate of the fish ; and whether he obtained his post by force or favour, he certainly fared sumptuously, for he grew disgustingly corpulent. Now, some well-meaning busybodies thought it was very hard the poor fish should have to maintain such a greedy guest, whether he would or no ; so they unceremoniously took upon themselves to turn the parasite out of his dwelling.

Very triumphant they were when their philanthropic deed was accomplished ; but the sequel of

* There is a curious description of the Alewife and its parasite in the fifth volume of the American Philosophical Transactions. The insect, which belongs to the Crustacea, is said to be about two inches long, hanging in the mouth of the fish with its back downwards. The fishermen consider the insect essential to the life of the Alewife.

the story was, that the Alewife died from injuries received in having the fourteen legs of the Oniscus detached from their hold. Thus Pagurus and Maculata chatted, but the former had nearly in the end paid for his meddling. Chain after chain of Salpidæ, of enormous length, swam through the tranquil waters with regular serpentine movements, the individuals of which they were composed contracting and expanding simultaneously, keeping time and step like a regiment of soldiers. Pagurus beheld them with amazement ; and his surprise increased as he found himself involved in a perfect labyrinth of chains. Whilst endeavouring to free himself from their coils, a dogfish darted suddenly through the water, and had nearly put an end to his pilgrimage by swallowing him whole and entire ; but, fortunately, he perceived his danger in time to take shelter under a friendly leaf of Laminaria. Brave as he was, there were times when he was forced to succumb to the necessity of retreating ; and this was one. He knew he could not withstand the attack of a dogfish.

For some time he remained in his place of shelter. Then the Anemone looked out ; and, as she reported no danger, he ventured, though somewhat warily, to resume his travels. The shoal of Salpæ, and the dogfish, had alike disappeared.

No remarkable incident occurred for a time, though Pagurus was ever meeting with something novel and strange.

He passed by cities densely peopled by the Flustra and Pennatulidæ—busy hives by day, and at night lighted up with wonderful brilliancy. Countless multitudes of the Acalephæ moved slowly along : some like globes of fire ; others whose cilia reflected brilliant prismatic colours, or flashed with beautiful blue light ; and others again exemplifying the description in Coleridge's " Ancient Mariner : "—

" Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes,
They moved in tracks of shining white ;
And when they reared, the elfin light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

" Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire,

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam, and every track
Was a flash of golden fire."

Sometimes our Pilgrim passed over beds of *Zostera*, whose long riband-like leaves, green and lustrous, afforded shelter and nourishment to countless plants and animals. Sea-weeds of small size, but of exquisite beauty, tiny Molluscs, and flower-like Zoophytes, located themselves there; and sometimes, be it confessed, Pagurus, who had not a higher standard of right and wrong than other pilgrims, poached upon these rich *Zostera* beds, and set out again with the inner man considerably comforted and refreshed. Once he wasted a considerable time by stopping to lecture a Tunicata for leading such a lazy life. She had once been tolerably active, but had since settled down upon a rock, and folding herself in her leathery mantle, never afterwards took the slightest exercise. Pagurus spoke to her with great earnestness, but his expostulations were all in vain. "She was really too great an invalid," she informed him, "too deli-

cate and languid—she could not bear any fatigue, and must really recline, indeed her doctor had told her so, for the remainder of her life.” Upon another occasion, Pagurus remonstrated with a Pteropoda for leading the life of a mere butterfly. Dancing round and round, and glancing hither and thither, the fairy creature laughed gaily at her self-constituted Mentor, and clapped her wing-like fins to the tune of “*Partant pour la Syrie.*” She had heard it played on board a French ship when swimming once near the surface of the ocean, and, being musical, had readily caught the air.

The Hipponyx, of course, excited in his mind some sentiments of veneration, having voluntarily, like a Mole, imprisoned himself for life; and the Pholas, in his limestone cell, came in for a share of reverence; but he failed to appreciate the sober domestic character of the Spondylus clinging by his shelly spines—the outward tokens of her deeply-rooted affections—to the spot she had fixed on for her home. Nor did the Oyster meet with the regard due to such an exemplary individual, whose

labour of love it had been to form, day by day, leafy expansions of his shell,—each one a new expression of attachment to his native sands.

As Pagurus continued his journey, he lost sight of most of those forms of animal and vegetable life which had been familiar to him. The inhabitants of various countries seemed to be as diverse from each other as the respective vegetation; yet there were a few tribes which appeared to have almost Caledonian universality.

Wander where he would, he still met with the *Ianthina* encased in her frail, beautiful, deep-purple shell, and pushing onwards with her foot the small, weak raft of eggs she had so carefully constructed. Everywhere the blue eyes of the *Trochus* peered out from his pearly pyramidal house. Everywhere the *Haliotis* “showed the company his foot”—the very reverse of a Chinese lady’s in size—painting his habitation the while with colours the old masters never equalled. Everywhere the *Pecten* danced merrily in deep water, coquettishly opening and shutting her brightly-tinted valves, as a Spanish

beauty does her fan, hoping thus to attract attention to her sparkling eyes. And there were plants equally ubiquitous. The stout woody stems, and broad ribbon-like glossy olive leaves of the oar-weed* were to be met with everywhere, though gradually increasing in size and strength as our Pilgrim advanced further into the region of the tropics.

Everywhere the forked branches of the *Codium tomentosum* might be seen invested with a downy coat of colourless filaments, and on the surface of the water the Lady Wrack † spread out its nut-like air-vessels and flat strongly-veined fronds. But there was one plant which seemed to be pre-eminently a citizen of the world of waters. In fathomless depths, and in the most shallow pools, tossed on rough breakers, or anchored in tideless harbours, the lovely Fan-bearer expanded its fair leaves, borne on slender, thread-like stems, transparent as glass. Pagurus was informed by a very dark complexioned marine lady, by name Melania, a vegetarian, and also a great botanist, that this exquisite

* *Laminaria*.

† *Fucus vesiculosus*.

plant feeds on flint, which it manages in some manner to withdraw from the waters of the sea, though the method in which this is effected has never been ascertained.

The result is that, unlike all other flowers of the field and weeds of the ocean, the Fan-bearer is indestructible.

Melania further stated there were strange stories told about "the Diatomacea," as she learnedly styled the tiny tree.* She said there were traditions recording its existence in times too remote for history; that the land, of which some

* Many of the existing species of Diatomacea are found in a fossil state. The examination of the most ancient of the stratified rocks, and of all others in the ascending scale, and the investigation of deposits now in course of formation, teach us that from the first dawn of animated nature up to the present hour this prolific family has never ceased its activity. We cannot count them by millions merely, but by hundreds of thousands of millions. In some countries they constitute the leading features of the structure, and none is entirely without such monuments. No part of our modern seas is destitute of this ever-springing vegetation. Floating masses of ice, when melted, have yielded them in millions, and the small dust in the atmosphere has been found to be composed of Diatomacea.

HARVEY'S *Sea-Side Book*, p. 175.

travellers talked so largely, and which, she was quite sure, was some perfectly uninhabitable region, was built up of the numerous skeletons of the Diatomacea ; that the air, which she understood to be the ocean of the birds, was filled with them too. In short, there was no end to the wonders this learned lady would have related of her favourite plant, if Pagurus could have spared time to listen ; but he felt himself obliged to proceed on his journey, and so politely bade her black ladyship farewell.

The toils and dangers of a long and weary pilgrimage pressed heavily at times upon Pagurus ; he had become scrupulous, too, about destroying life, and, indeed, from conscientious motives, would have abstained entirely from animal food, but his organisation would not admit of his adopting a purely vegetable diet, and this was a great trouble to him. But his greatest perplexity was how best to choose a suitable and safe retreat at the annually recurring period when he changed his armour ; so many formidable enemies were ready to take ad-

vantage of his temporary weakness if he ventured to remain in an exposed situation. It was on one of these occasions that he became deeply indebted to a kind-hearted and hospitable Pinna. He was turning away from a rock, where he had been more than once rudely repulsed, though all he asked was a few days' lodging until his strength should have returned.

The Pinna, anchored safely by her beautiful silken hair,

“ ————marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the *pilgrim* well.”

Instantly her orders were obeyed, and it was a curious and interesting coincidence that the attendant who came to the castle door, and directed him to a snug crevice in the rock, was a distant relation of his own family. Many times had this little sentinel warned his mistress of approaching danger long before other eyes than his own sharp red organs of vision could detect the approach of

the foe : thus amply and gratefully repaying the protection bestowed upon him in the stately home to which he had been admitted.*

Pagurus remained here in great comfort until the necessary changes in his attire were accomplished, and before he left the spot the Pinna presented to him a remarkably beautiful, but very diminutive scallop, which the Anemone, pretending to admire excessively, seized and swallowed. She disgorged the two valves, however, and being very handy—no wonder, considering the number of fingers she possessed—she fixed them neatly on the front of their shell ; and thus, with an additional pilgrim badge, Pagurus continued his journey. The weariness and dissatisfaction which had caused our ex-soldier to forsake his former course of life, and commence this toilsome pilgrimage, had been dissipated for a time by the excitement and novelty of the under-

* The Cuttlefish is the enemy of the Pinna ; but she has a friend in a little crab which lives in her shell, and, as an old writer says, “pays well for his lodging.” The crab has red eyes, and sees very sharply, and whenever he observes the foe at hand, he gives a warning, which is attended to at once.

taking and the various new scenes which constantly awaited him ; but it is true, though somewhat of a paradox, that perpetual change becomes in itself monotonous ; and Pagurus was weary once more, and longed to reach his destination and lie down beneath the shadow of some illustrious tomb, it might be only to look and die ; but Maculata laughed at his sentimentalism, as she termed it, and told him he had a great deal to do before he talked about dying. As for herself, she intended to be Queen of the rock when she arrived there. She was sure such a beauty as herself had never been seen in those barbarous regions, “and beauty,” she remarked to him, “like music,

“ ‘has charms to soothe the savage breast.’ ”

Pagurus only smiled at her rhapsodies ; he was too noble to remind her that throughout the journey she had been a carriage lady, and he had acted the part of the horse, and that for a long time past, whilst she had indulged in every dainty he had practised the most rigid abstemiousness. His brave

spirit was still undaunted, his courage never failed, even when his longings to reach the haven became most intense.

He was not far from it now. One evening in the fading sunlight, he came in view of a submarine mountain of vast height ; he knew its dim outline—familiar by many an old tradition—seen in many a midnight vision.

Overpowered by mingled feelings of solemnity and joy, he prostrated himself on the ground. Too much excited, too full of thoughts to sleep through the dark hours, he watched anxiously for the morning, and with its earliest dawn betook himself once more to his journey. How slow his progress seemed, compared with his desires ! how far the willing soul outran the tardy feet ! Many days passed on ere he reached the base of the mountain, and very many more ere the toilsome ascent was accomplished. He lingered on steeps immortalised by conflicts in which the Gasteropoda, though defeated by immeasurably superior strength and numbers, had performed prodigies of valour.

He stopped reverently at the mouths of caverns, which had been the last refuge of heroes, and where the noble had perished.

At length the utmost heights were gained—the most renowned of all the battle-fields where Crustacean blood had flowed so freely. He knew not how long he stood there—histories of the past crowding upon his mind—gazing with wonder amounting to awe at the exceeding beauty of the scene around.

He could see far down into the depths below, through the clear water. There was little of the ordinary vegetation, but in its stead were living blossoms no paradise of flowers could rival.* The very colours of the rainbow were put to shame by the glowing loveliness of those regions of the deep, bright, tranquil sea.†

Had not the thoughts of Pagurus been wholly pre-occupied, he would have noted the glance of

* Mantell's "Wonders of Geology," p. 486.

† Captain B. Hall's "Fragments of Voyages and Travels," vol. i., p. 115.

envy and fierce jealousy in Maculata's eyes—would have heard her groan of mortification as she too beheld these exquisite children of the sunny wave.

She had always deemed herself pre-eminently fair, but now she saw herself indeed eclipsed ; for she was only like a flaunting autumn crocus with no green leaf to shade or soften her gaudy hues, whilst the fairy blossoms she looked upon had leaflets and branches, not frail and perishable like other beauteous things, but enduring as time itself. Maculata came no more to her porch door, there was no more strength left in her, and it was afterwards surmised, with considerable probability, that she had died of a broken heart. Pagurus gazed long and with ever-increasing admiration upon the beautiful *Helianthoida*. They had paved the naked rock with rich mosaic, and colonists from among them had converted the ancient battle-plain into a populous and flourishing city, built with wonderful architectural skill and regularity. More than all else, Pagurus remarked the close brotherhood in which they lived, and their unceasing industry.

Labour, proportioned to the capacity of each, was the lot of all, and none seemed to think it a degradation to spend his life usefully. There were no beggars in their neat and orderly streets, nor lounging gentlemen asking how best to kill the time which hangs so heavily on idle hands. And there was no empty parade of independence. Each supported and strengthened his neighbour, and was supported and strengthened by him in return. Liberty, equality, and fraternity, terms so much abused, so often misapplied, were the appropriate watchword of this great republic, a republic whose national existence dates from centuries too remote for human or even Crustacean calculation. The smallest yet the mightiest builders in the world, they have reared from the inconstant waves not dwellings only, not merely towns and cities, but vast islands and continents :—

“ Millions of millions thus, from age to age,
With simplest skill and toil unwearyable,
No moment and no movement unimproved,
Laid line on line, on terrace terrace spread,
To swell the heightening, brightening, gradual mound,

By marvellous structure climbing tow'rd the day.
Each wrought alone, yet all together wrought,
Unconscious, not unworthy, instruments
By which a hand invisible was rearing
A new creation in the secret deep." *

The time had once more arrived when Pagurus would have to undergo the annual change of armour. A strange presentiment of some still greater change pressed upon him—his pilgrimage was finished—he was waiting now—he scarcely knew for what.

One evening, looking upwards through the water, he beheld some lovely forms on the surface of the waves, transparent as the purest glass, with broad tails, and slender divergent limbs, so clear and colourless, that they could scarcely be detected but for their lovely blue eyes. A devout believer in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, Pagurus recognised at once, or thought he did, the spirits of those heroes whose graves he had come so far to look upon, clothed with beauty, and exalted to a higher state of existence. He sprang towards them with an irresistible impulse. Alas ! he was seized

* Montgomery's "Pelican Island," canto ii., p. 27.

by a monster on the watch for prey, and dragged out of his shell. One struggle—one moment of agony—and all was over—the Pilgrim's life was past !

There were who said that at the moment of his death another blue-eyed *Phyllosoma* skimmed the bright waters, welcomed by the rest with honours only accorded to one who had surmounted the difficulties, and braved the dangers of pilgrimage.

“ O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare ;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware.”

Farewell, beloved Pagurus ! We have followed thee in thy chequered course, and it is with reluctance we part from thee now. But all things have an end—the author's time, and even the reader's patience ; therefore, once more, farewell !

THE END.

LONDON :

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

NS
AUTHOR OF WOODSORREL
HERMIT-CRAB
1858

dt



37131 009 534 322

