

On the sweet summer wind its purple wings,
 In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
 And coral reefs lie bare,
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

“Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl ;
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl !
 And every chambered cell,
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
 Before thee lies revealed—
 Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed !

“Year after year beheld the silent toil
 That spread his lustrous coil ;
 Still, as the spiral grew,
 He left the past year’s dwelling for the new,
 Stole, with soft step, its shining archway through,
 Built up its idle door,
 Stretched in his last found home, and knew the old no more.

“Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
 Child of the wandering sea,
 Cast from her lap forlorn !
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn !
 While on my ear it rings,
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings :

“Build thee more stately mansions, oh, my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll !
 Leave thy low-vaulted past !
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea !”

The “pearly nautilus” exemplifies the structure of a “chambered shell.” Such shells in their endless variations played a most conspicuous part in the history of ancient life, though one genus alone survives to recite the glory and illustrate the economy of his cephalopodous ancestors. The variable elements in the shell are the form of the sep-