

small kind of sea-acorns.* It is related also, that certain crabs get into their shells, first introducing a piece of stone to hinder them from shutting; but this is probably fabulous; they may, however, when the oysters open their shells to receive the sea-water, enter them as they do those of the mussels and the wing-shell, either for protection or for the sake of food. It is observed, that the oyster defends itself against intrusive enemies by squirting upon them with force water kept in reserve in their shells; they keep out those that attempt to pierce their shells to get at them, by thickening them in the part attacked.

I shall next give some account of a bivalve that has interested mankind from a very early period of history, on account of the valuable gem that it produces, and which is frequently mentioned in Holy Scripture. The Supreme Being, in his goodness and attention to the wants and tastes of his principal creature, has not neglected to furnish him with various articles for ornament as well as for use: and the most valuable of all possessions, the kingdom of grace in the heart, is symbolized by a *pearl* of great price; and though the apostle charges females not to adorn themselves *with gold or pearls, but with good works*, the meaning of the passage is, that the latter should have their *first* attention, not to forbid absolutely the use of the former—they are to adorn themselves not so much with gold or pearls as with good works—which ought to be the object of their most sedulous care.

The animal that produces pearls in the greatest abundance, of the purest nature, and of the highest value, was by Linné classed with the mussels,† but Lamarck has formed it into a distinct genus which he names *Meleagrina*. In this country it is usually called the pearl-oyster. It inhabits the Persian Gulf, the coasts of Ceylon, the sea of New

* *Balanus*, &c.

† *Mytilus margaritiferus*.