

make use of houses that they had no hand in erecting, as the bees, the cuckoo, and sometimes the bear, &c. ; but I do not recollect any that, as it were, clothe themselves with the cast garments of other animals. Providence, besides the defence of their otherwise unprotected bodies, has no doubt some object of importance in view in giving them this instinct. Perhaps they may accelerate the decomposition of the shells they inhabit, and cause them sooner to give way to the action of the atmosphere; and as all exuviæ may be termed nuisances and deformities, giving to these deserted mansions an appearance of renewed life and locomotion, removes them in some sort from the catalogue of blemishes. By this physical hypocrisy, of assuming the aspect of a different animal, which is known as not having powerful means of destruction, these creatures may deceive the unwary, and make them their prey, which if they wore the livery of their own tribe, would be on their guard and escape them.

Next to the Hermit-crabs, or rather Hermit-lobsters,* comes a very interesting genus, which might be denominated *Tree-lobsters*, from the singular circumstance of their quitting the sea, like the Climbing-perch,† and in the night ascending the cocoa-nut, and other palm-trees, for the sake of their fruit. The species which manifests this remarkable instinct is gigantic, and must exhibit a striking spectacle when engaged in ascending the stem of a cocoa tree; but Mr. Cummings observed its proceedings in the Polynesian Islands, where he saw it ascending the palm-trees and devouring their fruit. I have in a former chapter,‡ stated that the *Climbing-perch* ascends the fan-palm in pursuit of certain Crustaceans, perhaps related to the *Birgus*, which frequent it. Freycinet observed these crabs, in the Marian Islands, and says that their claws have wonderful strength, for when the animal has seized a stick an infant may be suspended

* *Birgus Latro*.

† Vol. i. p. 144.

‡ Ibid. p. 144.