

These were happy evenings,—all the more happy from the circumstance that I was still in heart and appetite a boy, and could relish as much as ever, when their season came on, the wild raspberries of the Conon Woods,—a very abundant fruit in that part of the country,—and climb as lightly as ever, to strip the gualan-trees of their wild cherries. When the river was low, I used to wade into its fords, in quest of its pearl muscles (*Unio Margaritiferus*); and, though not very successful in my pearl-fishing, it was at least something to see how thickly the individuals of this greatest of British fresh-water molluscs lay scattered among the pebbles of the fords, or to mark them slowly creeping along the bottom,—when, in consequence of prolonged droughts, the current had so moderated that they were in no danger of being swept away,—each on its large white foot, with its valves elevated over its back, like the carapace of some tall tortoise. I found occasion at this time to conclude, that the *Unio* of our river fords secretes pearls so much more frequently than the *Unionidæ* and *Anadonta* of our still pools and lakes, not from any specific peculiarity in the constitution of the creature, but from the effects of the habitat which it is its nature to choose. It receives in the fords and shallows of a rapid river many a rough blow from sticks and pebbles, carried down in times of flood, and occasionally from the feet of the men and animals that cross the stream during droughts; and the blows induce the morbid secretions of which pearls are the result. There seems to exist no inherent cause why *Anodon Cygnea*, with its beautiful silvery nacre,—as bright often, and always more delicate, than that of *Unio Margaritiferus*,—should not be equally productive of pearls; but, secure from violence in its still pools and lakes, and unexposed to the circumstances that provoke abnormal secretions, it does not produce a single pearl for every hundred that are ripened into value and beauty by the exposed current-tossed *Unionidæ* of our rapid mountain rivers. Would that hardship and suffering bore always in a creature of a greatly higher family similar results, and that the hard buffets dealt him by fortune in the rough stream of life could