

the form of their shell and of its aperture, its increment could not take place in the usual way; these animals, therefore, are furnished by their Creator with a remarkably ample mantle, the wings of which cover half the shell, and thus it is gradually thickened, and changes and variations in the colour take place that have puzzled conchologists to distinguish a species from a variety. At certain times the animal is also stated to quit its shell, and form itself a new one more appropriate to its size, a circumstance related by Aristotle of the Buccinum.†

Volutes are another polished tribe of shells, which are probably formed by the mantle as in the Cowries; they are particularly distinguished by having no operculum. The jet volute is viviparous, and its young when excluded are said to have shells an inch long. These probably are more exposed to enemies than the young of other shell-fish. They form an important article of food to some African nations.

Before I close this account of these predaceous Molluscans, I must observe, that they have two distinct sexes, and consequently male and female shells. The genuine hermaphrodites are confined to the bivalves, for in the univalve hermaphrodites two individuals are necessary for re-production, and therefore those form a distinct link between the true hermaphrodites that impregnate themselves, and those that have distinct sexes. So gradual are the steps by which the Creator passes from low to high. First, animals are re-produced without sexual intercourse, as in the polypes; then the two sexes are united in one body, and suffice for their own impregnation; next follow two sexes in the same body, which cannot impregnate themselves, bringing us at last to distinct sexes, or unisexual individuals.

* Κηρυξ, Arist.