

**SILVERSHELL; OR,
THE ADVENTURES
OF AN OYSTER**

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Silvershell; Or, the Adventures of an Oyster by Charles Williams

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CHARLES WILLIAMS

**SILVERSHELL; OR,
THE ADVENTURES
OF AN OYSTER**



OYSTER DREDGING.

GS 33-275
L.H. Soper.

SILVERSELL;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF AN OYSTER.

BY

THE REV. CHARLES WILLIAMS.

"Dost know how an Oyster makes his shell?"

SHAKESPEARE.

SECOND EDITION, WITH MANY ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:

JUDD & GLASS, GRAY'S INN ROAD,
AND 21 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1857.

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The evolution of the silver shell
Jan 47

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INTRODUCTION.

“THE life of an oyster, forsooth ! Why, what can possibly be said about that ? ”

“ Much,” it may be replied to such a question,—
“ much, too, that is generally unknown.”

To the many, not only of the ignorant and stolid, but of the cultivated and intellectual, an oyster is simply a delicacy. The mere oyster-eater eagerly seizes that double-shell, thrusts his knife forcibly between its valves, gives it a hasty wrench, and extracting daintily the little creature within, instantly swallows it, without consideration. He may think, indeed, that if one oyster be agreeable, two or three dozen will be still more so ; and that there is, therefore, a large amount of pleasure accessible whenever the head is removed from a barrel of “ Milton ” or “ Colchester natives.” But all he does is just to gratify his palate, and to excite or to satisfy the cravings of his stomach.

Now we are of opinion that an oyster, only regarded as a thing to be eaten, and having actually but a low place in the ascending series of animals, not only demands, but will richly reward, an en-

lightened examination. Never were there such facilities for engaging in it as at the present time, when the microscope throws new light on what was previously known, and brings into full view so much that was but recently entirely concealed. Gratefully do we acknowledge our obligations to the illustrious men who have so energetically employed this instrument in the past, and heartily would we encourage them in their present and future labours.

In offering, therefore, the Biography of an Oyster, we say with George Wither, when he presented his book to his Sovereign,

" Good sir! reject it not, although it bring
Appearances of some fantastic thing
At first unfolding;"

while the "caveat" of good old Thomas Adams may well be added: "Do not open it at adventures, and by reading the broken pieces of two or three lines judge it; but read it through, and then I ask no pardon if thou dislikest it. Farewell."

THE
ADVENTURES OF AN OYSTER.

CHAPTER I.

WHO WAS SILVER-SHELL ?

SILVER-SHELL WAS NOT A FISH—A MOLLUSK DESCRIBED—SILVER-SHELL WAS NOT A FLUVIATILE CREATURE—THE OYSTERS WHICH GROW ON TREES—MARINE RANGE OF THE OYSTER—ANSWER TO THE QUESTION FIRST PROPOSED.

SILVER-SHELL was an Oyster : but “thereby hangs a tale” that will take some little time in telling. The narrator, however, is ready : a listener only is needed.

There are many instances in which the name of a creature gives some indication of what it is : as, a bird is designated “the cuckoo” from its well-known note ; and an insect is called “the carpenter bee” from its movements resembling those of that well-known artisan ; but the oyster cannot be cited as an example of this kind. Its earliest names in Greek and Latin are