

garden,—a blue, clear lake, which came very near the place where he was lying. He started up to look more closely at it; and the smooth soft grass on which he had been resting was changed to a bold rock jutting out into the water.

While he looked with astonishment at those wonders, he saw a boat of a singular form approaching the shore. It floated bravely upon the waves, but resembled in form the snail-shell which he had been so long watching, though it far exceeded it in size. He immediately began to sing out in a loud tone one of the snail-ditties which he had been repeating; but he had hardly finished the first line.—

“Out of your house, little snail, crawl.”

When to his great amazement, from the mouth of this strange boat issued an old man, with a long beard, and a heavy oar in his hand.

“What do you want of me?” said the old man, in a tone that made the little boy forget all his snail-ditties.

“Indeed, sir,” said the little boy, “I did not mean to disturb such an old gentleman as you in his afternoon nap. I had never seen one of the inhabitants of the little, twisted palaces which I meet with in my father’s garden; and I just thought—”

“Don’t tell me,” said the old man, “what you just thought; but just step into my boat, and I will teach you to disturb people with your songs about mill-stones, and musquitoes, and nuns and friars.”

As he stretched out his hand to seize the boy’s shoulder, and showed that he could make pretty good use of his heavy oar, Jasper—for that was the boy’s name—made no resistance, but quietly stepped into the strange-looking craft, and seated himself on a little jutting edge of the inside timber. The old man followed him, seated himself at the mouth of the boat, and guided it with his oar in the manner which boatmen call sculling.

They made rapid progress through the water, and the boat was soon stopped at a little island. The old man descended to the shore, and ordered Jasper to do the same. Having first fastened his boat to a twisted post which was placed on the bank, he proceeded up a pathway which led to the principal town of the island.

Here, every thing had a most singular appearance. The houses, great and small, were all built in the manner of snail shells. They were of various sizes, and of different

materials. Some were dazzling bright, as of gold or precious stones; others of a dark, cold, clay color. But what was most remarkable, as Jasper watched this strange village, he now and then saw a house moving from place to place; and, as he watched these moving houses, he could perceive the head and shoulders of a man or woman peeping out of every one.

The old man led Jasper to a very damp, shady corner of the village, where there was a house of an enormous size, and, near it, one much smaller.

“As you will probably be with us for some time,”—“I hope not very long,” whispered Jasper to himself,—“I shall beg you to make use of this house here behind us,” said the old man: “it belonged to a nephew of mine, who met with an accident the other day, and has no farther use for it. A mischievous fellow threw him, house and all, under the mill-stone, which pressed him so closely as to cause his death. There is a small crack in the house; but that is no matter. Before you retire to your new dwelling, however, let me offer you some refreshment.”

He then placed before the astonished boy some roots and vegetables. Jasper did not much like the appearance of them; but he was too well bred not to eat what was set before him; and, as he had a pretty good appetite, he got along very well, though the food was a little too moist for his taste. The old gentleman was too busy about his own meal to pay much attention to Jasper.

When they had done eating, Jasper pointed with an inquiring eye, to a whole troop of little houses which were hurrying off in the same direction. He felt too much afraid of the old man to ask where they were going, though he wanted sadly to know.

The old man saw his asking look, and said: “These little fellows you perceive walking along so briskly are going to school; for, different as our ways are from yours, we do not leave our young folks without proper teaching. And, now I think of it, you must join them; for, as I have taken you under my care, I shall see you properly brought up. So, get into the house which lies there ready for you, and march off with the rest, my little man.”

Jasper, who did not like this proceeding much, ventured to tell the old man that he was not used to carrying his house