

AN OYSTER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I PROPOSE to talk about myself. And why not? The great foe of my family, the lord of Creation, never wearies in talking about himself. And if I say something about my fellow creatures, also, who shall chide me? Have I not as much right to gossip as my respectable enemy? "Vanity," is it? Be it so; but it is not vexation of spirit, since I have no spirit to vex. Besides, I am no more vain than my neighbors, who pretend to more mental and moral qualities than I possess.

Well, about myself! Speaking negatively, I have no genius for warfare, like Miltiades the hero of Marathon, or Themistocles of Salamis—I do not dabble in literature, like Ruskin, Carlyle or Tennyson—Nor am I a theological student, or even a College Professor.

I am only an *Oyster*—a humble specimen of that wretched degeneration, which a lazy, torpid, backboneless, inactive creature, is bound to reach. Though only an ocean groveller, I am the "Innocent Abroad." I am not what you would call great, but I am a great relish and greatly prized. I have no head for anything; but I am often found in the head of my foes. Having no head, I have no brain worth speaking about, but it is sometimes conceded that I do service in helping the brain power of some rather pretentious beings. I have neither arms, *eyes*, nor *ears*, and I am not even sure that I have a *nose*. A few wiseacres, known as Naturalists, say that I have one; but others pooh! pooh! the idea, and say that I have not. If I am allowed the honor of wearing a nose, methinks it must be a curious one, for those who contend for it say that it covers my whole body! But even my direst enemy admits that I have a *heart*, and this is more than can be said of him and his friends. I know that I am thin skinned, but why taunt me by avowing that the only *sense* I have is the sense of *touch*? It is not christian to retaliate, but the sense of *touch* too often passes for "common sense" in some quarters. My skin is called a "*Mantle*," which is a trifle too large for me, it is true; but my dress-maker has put a number of tucks in it so that it hangs in graceful folds about my body. I am not ashamed to say that I have a "*beard*," but as I have no face to wear it upon, it does duty as a fringe to my "*mantle*," and is more talked about, perhaps, than Samson's is. I am