

lances, and harpoons, as well as personal ornaments; while the mollusk itself was sought for and prized as food. The *strombus gigas* is still fished for the table off the Island of Barbadoes, and numerous ancient weapons and implements made from its shell have been dug up on the island. Pearls also, of a beautiful pink color, are occasionally formed by this shell-fish, and from their rarity are greatly valued; while the modern adaptation of the ancient cameo-engraver's art to shells, as well as their employment in the production of the finer porcelain and miniature statuary, have led to those beautiful marine products of the American tropics being more sought after, in Europe, for the manufacture of personal ornaments and other works in the highest class of art, even than the coveted secretions of the *meleagrina*, brought from the pearl fisheries of Ormus or Ceylon, or from the Bahrein Islands in the Persian Gulf.

Thus the necessities of man in the savage state, and the ever-varying devices to gratify the luxurious exactions of civilization, have equally contributed to the ingenious application of the shells, and other products of molluscos animals, to the use of man. Under this head we might refer to the *murex trunculus* of the Mediterranean, the source, as is believed, of the celebrated Tyrian purple of the ancient world; and to others of the genus *purpura*,—such as the *purpura lapillus*,—which have also been turned to use by the dyer. The various pearl-producing species of the *meleagrina*, in like manner illustrate the refinements and excesses of ancient and modern luxury. The orient pearl of the Egyptian queen, “The treasure of an oyster,” and the occidental pearl of Philip II., from St. Margaritas, the pearl island of our New World, which weighed 250 carats, and was valued at 150,000 dollars; or again the still more costly pearl of Louis XIV., brought from Catifa on the Arabian Coast, by his excentric protégé, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, the son of an Antwerp engraver whom the Grand Monarch created Baron d'Aubonne, and who paid for his Arabian pearl the almost incredible sum of £110,000. Great as are the sums still annually expended on the produce of the pearl fisheries for the gratification of eastern and western luxuriance of ornamentation, the Antwerp adventurer has secured the palm for the licentious Court of Louis le Grand. The most abundant annual pearl harvest in the world is believed to be the product of the Bahrein Island fisheries, in the Persian Gulf, but the revenue of this falls somewhat short of £100,000 sterling, even in the most prolific years. Pearls to the