Sea-anemones are more like flowers than animals, but this need not surprise us: for Nature, which makes the flowers so beautiful and so symmetrical (or regular) in pattern, delights in symmetry both in animal and vegetable life, and even in things without life, and often places in the sea what seems to be a copy of something dwelling on the land. Thus things so unlike as starch and snow-flakes crystallize in set patterns. Look at the next pound of starch you have and count the sides of half a dozen pieces, and examine your window-pane the first time there is a sharp frost.

So there are stars in the pool as well as in the sky, sea-cucumbers as well as garden cucumbers. There are sea-slugs, and sea-urchins: and the knobs of jelly I have mentioned seem to blossom into carnations and sun-flowers, into marigolds, and daisies, and anemones.

But

'Things are not what they seem,'

Longfellow tells us. A sponge looks like a vegetable and a coral like a stone, but both are animals which grow from the bottom of the sea, the substances visible to us being simply the skeletons of the living creatures. Anemones, although related to the corals, have no skeletons, and 'lumps of jelly' is the phrase which comes to our mind when asked to describe them. There is however, no real resemblance between a sea-anemone and a jelly-fish. The latter is transparent, and is little else than a disk of salt water. A not very wise old farmer once found an immense number of large jelly-fish on the beach, and ordered his men to carry thm into his field. 'They will make capital manure,' he said. To his astonishment they dissolved and disappeared. The solid matter in a cart-load might have been put into the old gentleman's waistcoat pocket.

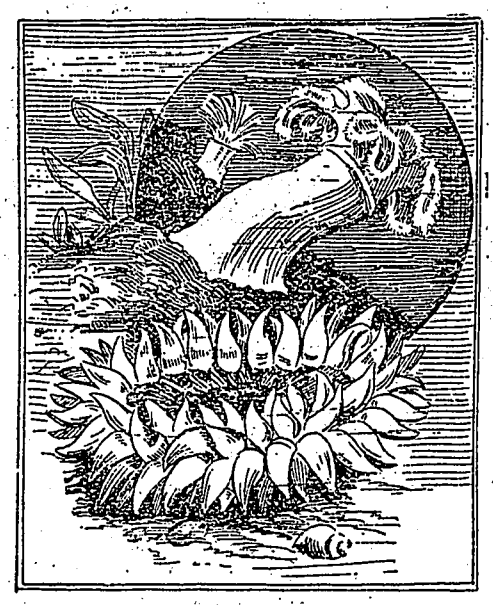
Anemones are more like lumps of liver, if lumps of liver could ever assume such beautiful shapes and colors. For these lowly beings are so exquisite in their flower-like forms that enthusiastic collectors have considerable difficulty in finding names to fitly describe their peculiarities. There is the Snowy and the Plumose, the Opelet, the Beadlet, and the Pimplet, the Eyelet, the Muzzlet, the Gapelet, and the Pufflet. With all this difference of color and of petals, if we may so call their tentacles, they have a common family likeness.

To begin with they have no bones. They are simply knobs of flesh, the flat base of which usually rests on and adheres to the rock. An oval opening at the top of the knob serves as a mouth, and such domestic arrangements as pertain to digestion are carried on in a simple bag in the interior. The body is highly elastic, expanding and contracting at the owner's pleasure by means of muscles under the outer skin, which is known as the tunic. At the top of the knob a large number of thread-like tentacles project when the creature is undisturbed, and give it the appearance of a beautiful flower. And just as flowers are more for use than for ornament, attracting by their color and perfume the insects needed to carry the fertilizing pollen from one plant to another, so the tentacles of the anemone are used for stern business purposes. They are the bait to lure the shrimps and young crabs, and the hands to seize and hold them fast. Although apparently fragile, they close on the vagrant and curious prey with resistless force, and convey it to the oval mouth on its way to the stomach. Anemones possess excellent digestions, and soon nothing is left but an empty shell, which is tidily and deftly ejected.

Like many lowly organized animals the anemone has what is sometimes called 'good flesh for healing.' Thus a crab can jerk off a leg and grow another, and a lizard can easily renew its lost tail, occasionally even growing two to replace the original article. An anemone cut or accidently torn from the tentacles to the base dies, but one which has unhappily been amputated across the middle of the back makes light of the accident. The top piece simply sprouts another bottom, and the bottom part another top, and trouble themselves no more about the matter. The only result of the little episode is that there are two anemones instead of one.

Although anemones are so little affected by what we should regard as fatal accidents, they are by no means wanting in susceptibility. A touch with the finger will cause the open flower to contract to a mere button, and the tramp of footsteps on the sand in which some of them live is felt at a considerable distance, and the anemone ejects water and disappears. More striking still, even the shadow of a cloud passing over

PALLID ANEMONE. PLUMOSE ANEMONE.



DAHLIA ANEMONE.

the shoal water in which they are lying is sufficient to cause them to contract instantly. They are marine sensitive plants.

It is difficult to ascertain the limit of life of any but domesticated animals. In their wild state animals cannot well be kept under observation, and in captivity the conditions of life are so unnatural that it is not easy to say whether life has been shortened or prolonged. Obviously, anemones can only be watched to much purpose when kept in aquariums, and we must be content with such evidence as is thus obtained. Whatever may happen in the sea, where they are exposed to the violence of the waves and the teeth of enemies, it is certain that anemones protected by man live to a ripe age. A specimen of the commonest species, the Beadlet, taken at North Berwick, lived so many years that she became almost historic, under the name of 'Granny,' outliving three or four generations of caretakers.

Young Beadlets attach themselves to rocks left bare at half-tide, as if to take the air for their health's sake, but when grown larger and more staid betake themselves to deeper water. This best known species is usually liver-colored; but crimson specimens are also found, and brown, and pale green. If the liver Beadlets be touched when open, the tentacles immediatly contract and disappear, leaving a row of blue beads around the rim, and from this the animal derives its name.

In contrast to this richly-colored species, and perhaps, more beautiful, are two anemones, white and cream respectively, and exquisite in their flower-like forms, known as the Snowy and Plumose anemones. A near relative of the Snowy anemone is said to be esteemed a great delicacy by the Italians. I am told by an Italian friend that his countrymen are not particular about the species, but impartially and readily eat them all with great gusto. They often swallow them raw, and flavored with a little garlic or with oil and lemon juice. After all, there is nothing repulsive in this when once you are used to it, for anemones are clean in their habits, and are doubtless easy to swallow and nourishing when swallowed. They are said to be excellent when boiled, resembling a mixture of calf's-foot jelly and lobster. But perhaps they are best fried with eggs and bread-crumbs.

I have already said that sea-anemones are able to change their position. As a rule most of the species do this to a very limited extent. They have no effective organs of locomotion, and sliding from rock to rock and from stone to stone is necessarily a slow process. But some species disdain such a slow, stay-at-home life, and roam, not exactly where they will, but where the sea pleases to take them.

Others again are, I regret to say, members of that degraded class of beings known as parasites. These parasites apparently love a wandering life, and, having no legs of their own, are clever enough to turn to their use the legs which belong to somebody else. Strictly speaking, it is carriage exercise they seek, and rapid motion. It is managed in this way. There are certain crabs, known as hermits, which, having no covering to protect their bodies, are in the habit of thrusting themselves into some shell, such as that of a whelk. They are never happy until they get possession of some other person's house. There is nothing dishonest in this, for they do not intrude until death has given the original owner a notice to quit. Now the parasitic anemone disregards the whelk as long as the latter keeps indoors, and turns up its nose at the empty shell; but the sight of a hermit crab hanging up its hat in this second-hand home is too great temptation to resist. Saying to itself, 'Here is a chance of a ride,' it manages to climb up behind, and the unhappy crab finds itself doomed to act as the donkey in the anemone's carriage, without payment or even thanks. The hermit crab has its revenge in bumping the shell over the stones, but this particular anemone has a very thick skin, and is, so far as can be seen, none the worse for the violent exercise. The anemone has the satisfaction of seeing the world without expense; it keeps a carriage, and the donkey keeps himself.

Labor in the Sunday-school is not in vain, although in seasons of discouragement Paul exhorts Christians to diligence in labor because that labor will be successful. 'Inasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.' He does not encourage them with prospects of success. He speaks of success as certain, and of their knowledge of the fact.