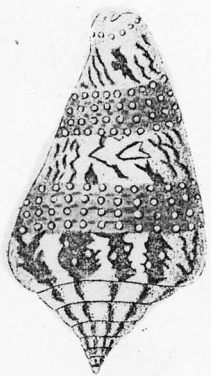
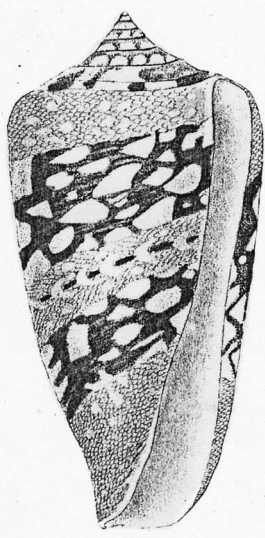


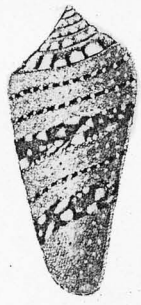
129

1.



4.

3.



2.

THE
NATURALIST'S REPOSITORY.

§c. §c. §c.

CONCHOLOGY.

PLATE I.

FIGURE I.

CONUS AMMIRALIS var AMBOINENSIS,
THREE-BANDED AMBOYNA HIGH-SPIRED
ADMIRAL SHELL.

UNIVALVE.

GENERIC CHARACTER.

Animal a limax. Shell univalve, convolute and turbinate. Aper-
ture effuse, longitudinal, linear, without teeth, entire at the base;
pallor smooth.

B

PLATE I.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER

AND

SYNONYMS.

Shell with rough punctures at the base.

CONUS AMMIRALIS: testa basi punctato scabra.

CONUS AMMIRALIS: testa basi punctato. *Linn. Syst. Nat.* 10
p. 714. n. 257.—*Mus. Lud. Ulr.* 553. n. 157.
Gmel. Linn. Syst. Nat. 3378. 10.

CONUS AMMIRALIS var AMBOINENSIS. *a.* Spire high and tapering; shell pyriform, glossy, smooth, pale yellowish with two broad bands of testaceous marked with large subsaggitate oval spots of white, and a narrow band between composed of white spots and intermediate testaceous dots.

Were it within the contemplation of our present views to enter into the ancient history of the science of Conchology, we should be under little difficulty in demonstrating upon the authority of the best informed historians as well as ancient classics that it has a claim to very remote antiquity. The study of Shells prevailed, at least to some extent, in those early times when the generality of mankind believe the world to have been buried in the depths of ignorance. At periods, even when some among those of better information may be inclined to imagine that the ancients could have had no very accurate conceptions of the nature of these bodies, or of their classification, natural or artificial, and even when it might be supposed from the warlike temper of the age the collecting of shells would have been deemed an unworthy occupation, we discover sufficient indications

CONCHOLOGY.

to prove that their leisure hours were so employed. The productions of the sea were delineated in their manuscripts; Pliny speaks of the delight the artist took in painting the asterias, or sea stars. The spontaneous offerings of the ocean were depicted in their natural colours upon the walls of their dwellings, abundant evidence of which appears among the ancient paintings of Herculaneum and Pompeii; and that the shells themselves were sometimes collected by the ancients is placed beyond a doubt from those remains which have been found, at various times, among the relics of those celebrated ruins, and also among the ruins of the Roman town, perhaps no less ancient, denominated La Scava.

It is declared by Pliny, in the ninth book of his Natural History, that the Romans of his time were better acquainted with the productions of the sea than the animals of the land, a circumstance he attributes, and unquestionably with sufficient reason, to the extravagant excess to which the luxurious taste of those times was carried. This will excite the less surprise when we recollect the various useful results deduced from this investigation. Of these we have several very memorable examples; the exquisite dyes of green, the scarlet, and the imperial purple, which they possessed and prized so eminently, were all the produce of testaceous bodies. And so likewise the pearls gathered from the various perlaceous bivalve shells; and pearls we are assured were in those days valued at Rome, as in Egypt, at a price infinitely beyond that of gold and gems, the diamond alone excepted.

Pliny tells us, that, in his time, after the diamonds of India and Arabia, pearls were esteemed most precious, and that we may be

PLATE I.

under no error as to the application of the text to the pearls found in shells, he further adds, that he had before spoken of these pearls in his book that treats upon the productions of the sea *. The diamonds in those times were so scarce, and esteemed so highly, as to be little known, except among princes, the smaller and most inferior kinds alone excepted. The pearls were the most costly jewels employed in the ornaments for the ears, the neck, and fingers of the fair sex, and the shells themselves were converted into various articles of finery for their wardrobe and furniture.

But it is not, as before observed, within our province in this place, to enter into any such latitude of explanation as an ample illustration of these remarks may be conceived to merit. It is our object only to express ourselves in general terms: it may be sufficient therefore to observe, that among the luxuries of the great in the times of Pliny, Oppian, and Juvenal, it is certain they indulged their peculiar taste in the study of these productions of the deep. They not only amassed together the more curious among those shells whose beauty attracted their regard, they entered also to some extent into their history and manners, and were sufficiently informed as to their natural properties to render them subservient to the general purposes of luxury and life. They knew the distinctions between the land, the fresh-water, and the marine tribes of shells, and they proceeded with minuteness and sometimes fully into their

* (Adamas.) Proximum apud nos Indicis Arabicisque margaritis pretium est, de quibus in nono diximus volumine inter res marinas." *Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 37. cap. 4.*

CONCHOLOGY.

history. No classic reader of the *Halieutics* of Oppian will doubt the general acquaintance of the ancients with those beings in their native element, nor will any one imagine, who is conversant with the lives of the philosophers of the infant ages of the world, that the study of Conchology, even as a science, was unknown. So many writings of the ancients, even of the classic ages of Greece and Rome, have disappeared, that it may be now impossible to form any very accurate conclusions, at the same time that enough remains to justify our persuasion that it was far from inconsiderable. Among others, the works of Aristotle, the preceptor of the Macedonian conqueror Alexander, have survived the ravages of time, and very happily, for the history of human knowledge unfolds to us the views which the ancients had then taken of natural science, and among the rest of the science of Conchology; and there is, moreover, every reason to believe that in the classification of the testaceous tribes, or shells, which the writings of this philosopher present us, we, in reality, possess the arrangement of the shells composing the Conchological collection of that most potent monarch, the conqueror of the world:—the classical distribution of the shells of the great Alexander, as they were disposed by the most celebrated naturalist of his age, and at a period more remote than three centuries before the commencement of the Christian æra.

The Science of Conchology, like that of all other branches of nature, has undergone its mutations at various periods. Generally, it has held a rank of some eminence, a circumstance attributable no doubt to the peculiar beauty of this interesting tribe. In speaking of the latter times, the period of the last and preceding centuries, it would be difficult to determine in which country of civilized Europe

PLATE I.

the science of Conchology has been most esteemed; at one time, the virtuosi of Holland, at another of France, and latterly of Britain, have endeavoured to produce the most extensive and costly cabinets of Conchology, and each in consequence may perhaps have excelled alternately; nor were other countries of Europe in this respect less emulous, or materially deficient in the number and excellence of their collections in this department of nature, during the same periods.

We have been unavoidably led into this train of digression and remark from a due consideration of the very interesting history connected with the shells which form the subject of the annexed Plate, the particulars of which, it is presumed, will be found to justify the general tendency of these observations, and these remarks may be considered also as a prelude to the introduction of many others among the number of those rarities which it is within our contemplation to produce progressively in the course of the present work; shells, to which the prevalence of general taste has assigned a value and importance scarcely less considerable than the nonpareil cones, or the eminently celebrated *cedo nulli*.

The first shell in the plate before us that invites attention from its magnitude is that superb cone delineated at figure 1. This shell, which once held a distinguished place in the Leverian Museum, is two inches and six-eighths in length, its greatest breadth one inch and three-eighths. The general colour pale yellowish, with two bands of chesnut, marked with irregular arrow-headed spots of white, and an intermediate narrow band composed of white spots of the same form, each connected by means of an intervening dot of

CONCHOLOGY.

beams, which, together, form a catenated band of peculiar elegance. When very closely examined with the aid of a magnifier, the whole surface of the shell appears finely reticulated with yellow.

This shell was sold in one of the latter day's sale of the Leverian Museum for the sum of five guineas and a half.

FIGURE II.

CONUS AMMIRALIS var AMBOINENSIS β .

SIX-BANDED AMBOYNA HIGH-SPIRED ADMIRAL SHELL.

Spire high and tapering; shell subpyriform; smooth, pale yellowish, sprinkled with fulvous; body-wreath with six bands, the three uppermost linear, and composed of alternate white and chesnut-colored dots, the three lower of two broad castaneous bands, marked with subsaggitate oval spots, and an intermediate narrow belt of alternate brown and white dots.

This shell, like the former, (fig. I) constituted part of the Leverian collection of exotic shells. Its length is an inch and half, its greatest breadth exceeding five-eighths of an inch.

Notwithstanding the inferiority of its size, this very elegant and curious shell is not less interesting than the preceding. The general

PLATE I.

tints in both are nearly the same, but in the present shell are rather deeper, the dots of fulvous brighter and more thickly sprinkled, and the bands more numerous. Like the former shell it has two broad bands of brown, checquered with subovate spots of white, and an intermediate dotted line, but these are placed rather nearer towards the narrower end of the shell, and the intervening space between the spire and the larger band, encompassed or girt round with two other linear bands, composed of white and brown dots, besides another still more conspicuous, and composed of larger spots along the base or body-wreath, contiguous to the spire or turban.

This little shell may be considered as affording an excellent type of one of the rarer kinds of *Conus Ammiralis*, the variety denominated the Six-banded high-spired Admiral Cone. During a period of some years that have now elapsed since the dispersion of that collection, no other example of this variety has occurred to our observation more perfect and characteristic in all its markings.

FIGURE III.

CONUS AMMIRALIS var CEDO NULLI a.

OLIVE-BANDED NONPAREIL CONE.

Spire high and tapering; marbled white, fulvous, and dusky; body-wreath with three subolivaceous bands, the broadest towards