

VIII. *A Letter from Sir Robert Sibbald to Dr. Martin Lister Coll. Med. Lond. & S. R. S. containing an Account of several Shells observed by him in Scotland.*

S I R,

I Received yours, and the *Exercitationes Medicinales*, for which I give you many thanks. I am perswaded the Method you take for promoting Learning is the best, your joining the Antient and Modern Learning together, in my Opinion doth both illustrate and advance our Art. Your late pieces, I hope, will prevail with some to abate of that Contempt they had of the Ancient Physicians; your Explaining in your *Exercitatio Anatomica Tertia*, the way the Stone is produced in the Bladder, from the way that Shells and Pearls are produced, and from the Petrifications that are made by Mineral Waters is most satisfying in my Opinion, and preferable to what I have seen Written by any other. I have seen some of the Stones taken out of the Bladder broak, which consisted of many Coats, like the Skins of an Onion. We have some Waters that Petrifie. Upon the North side of the *Firth of Forth*, some eight Miles from the City, there is a Cove close upon the Sea, the Roof of which is covered with a *Stalagmites* a Foot deep, like the Fringe of a Bed; the upper coat is of a Sea-colour, the Juice is as white as the *Sal Prunelle*; the Water which droppeth from it, if it touch the Skin, maketh it smart: Near to this same Cove, is a piece of an Hollow Rock; which within, from the top to the bottom, is full of so many orders of Columns, resembling the Pipes of a Church-Organ, and some of different Figures; I broke a small one and found some-  
what



what hollow in the middle. All the Ground in this place is full of Lime-stone.

You desired in yours a Collection of Shells from this place, I forbore to write hoping to have gotten some, but have not been so happy yet, for that there is little or no Communication with the Inhabitants of the Isles, the Sea is so infested with Pyrates. I am promised by a Friend who is going to *Sky* a Parcel, which if I get them I shall send to you; in the mean time I thought it might be acceptable to you, to give an Account of the rarest I have seen found here, or in our Isles: If I could have had your *Historia* or *Synopsis Methodica Conchiliorum*, I could have digested them in better Order; but tho' I gave several Commissions to our Book-sellers that went for *London*, I could never have it yet, they said to me it was not to be found in the Shops. I have entreated the Gentleman who delivereth this Letter to you, to know of you where it may be had, I am in hopes to learn much of Shells from it: *Bonani* giveth but little light in this matter.

*Of the Univalves.*

The rarest are 1. the *Nautilus Falconeri*, the Shell was sent me by a Friend from the North, and was broken by lying amongst the Stones upon the Shoar: The Structure is marvellous where the Animal lyeth, there are two Decks visible one above another of a Pearl Colour; there is a hole in the upper Deck naturally, thro' which may be seen the other Deck at some distance from the upper, and such another hole in it; the higher part of the Shell which resembleth a Helmit; where it is broken sheweth several vaulted division, betwixt which a Tube passeth that is hollow, they are of the Colour of Pearl too. The outmost Coat of the Shell is of a dark Grey Colour, which is much worn off in this, and there



there appeareth a smooth Coat, with Brown and White Stroaks.

The next to this is that which *Boccone* in his *Recherches* calleth the *Pediculus Ceti*, it is of one Valve, but what is singular, it is open at both ends; the Structure of it, both within, and without, is very curious; the Animal was so dryed I could not distinguish the parts of it, but it must be of an odd shape if it fit the sinuous Caverns that are in the inner part of the Shell.

The *Testudo Marina Squamosa* is sometimes cast in upon the Orkney Isles, the Shell of one was sent to me, was two Foot in length, and of a proportionable breadth. There is a great variety of the *Patellæ* or *Limpets* found in the Isle of Sky. Mr. *Martin* my Friend, a curious Gentleman, who was born there, and sometimes stayeth there shewed me these following.

Besides the common *Patella* there is one of a middle size of a dark Grey Colour, which is much flatter then the common *Patella*; the Circle about the Peak is of a lighter Colour, there are many *Striæ* runs from the Peak to the Border, and it hath another larger Circle near the Border.

There is another flat one raised too of a Grey Colour.

There is a *Conical Limpet* raised with the Peak White, and a Circle below it of an Orange Colour, the rest below that of the same Colour variegated with black Spots.

There is a Conical one too of a middle size, smooth and brownish with a white Peak.

There is an Oval Limpet of a fucal size, thin and transparent, the Peak of a dark Colour; in the Convex part below the middle, there are some blew Lines very beautiful.

There is a great variety of the *Trochi* likewise.

The *Trochus albidus maculis rubentibus distinctus*, a large sort of the same, and a lesser sort.



A *Trochus* of a middle size of the Colour of Pearl all over, which he told me he took up so out of the Sands.

A *Trochus* of a reddish Colour, marked with Spots that are dark.

A *Trochus* of a Colour betwixt Blew and Grey, marked with dark Spots, this had a *Cancellus* in it.

And Mr. *Martin* said he was told, that there was in the Isle of *Sky* a *Trochus* of a Gold Colour.

*Cochlea Umbilicata.*

There is a small sort of the *Cochlea Umbilicata*, with Waves of a brown Colour upon a white Ground.

There is a lesser *Cochlea Umbilicata*, with darker Waves upon a white Ground.

*Cochlea Fasciata.*

There is a small *Cochlea Fasciata* with the *Fasciæ* brown, upon a white Ground.

Another of that sort, with the *Fasciæ* darker upon a pale Ground.

A small *Cochlea* Yellow all over.

A small *Cochlea* of an Orange Colour.

A small one of a brown Colour, smooth, with waved Lines of a dark Colour.

*Nerita.*

There is a small *Nerita* of an Orange Colour.

One of the *Cochleæ Convins* of a smaller sort, of an Oker Colour.

*Of the Bivalves.*

There is great variety of the *Pectines* we call here *Clams*.

One of the middle size, with two Ears very White.

One of a dark Colour, variegated with white stroaks and spots.

Of the least sort, about the size of the *Roman Silver Medals*, and some less.

One with two Ears, with Orange Spots, upon a white Ground.

One



One entirely of an Orange Colour.

One of a Purplish Colour.

One variegated like a Gilly-flower, with broad purplish and white Spots. The Lines of this run transverse.

As do these, one with reddish and white streaks.

One with white Spots upon an Orange Ground.

One with a white Ground and dark Spots.

*With the Lines Perpendicular.*

One with two Ears with a dark Ground, and the Lines white and streight.

One of an Ear of a Purplish Colour.

One of an Ear Brownish, the upper part of the Shell raised somewhat above the edge, and the edge is more variegated.

*Of the Tellinæ.*

One with white and blew Fasciæ.

One with the Fasciæ yellowish and obscure.

*Of the Conchæ læves.*

One large with the Fasciæ dark, and some white lines running from the Peak to the Border.

One of a middle size, with the Fasciæ blewish, upon white perpendicular striæ. [Ground.

A third least of all, with white Fasciæ upon a reddish

A Pectunculus with a Fasciæ of a greyish Colour, and three streight Lines.

A Pecten of a small size, consisting as it were of 4 Shells, each of them raised somewhat above another, of a greyish blew Colour.

*Of the Quinquevalve.*

We have one sort of the Pholas best described by you:

And the Barnacle which I call *Concha quinquevalvis*

*animal sui generis continens variis cirrhis & caudâ rotundâ*

*Rugosâ instructum.* Dr. Balfour found Eggs in the cauda of it.

If any of these seem curious, I shall endeavour to procure of them for you, and what else may be acceptable to you.