

ABOUT CORAL.

The Greeks named coral the "daughter of the sea;" and Theophrastus reckons it among the precious stones. Pliny tells us that coral was no less esteemed in India than were pearls in Rome.

In Persia, China, and Japan coral was prized almost as much as gold. The Gauls in ancient times were accustomed to ornament their armor with this lovely product of the Gallic and Italian seas; but finding the value of it as an article of exportation, it soon became comparatively rare in the countries where it at first abounded.

Pliny describes coral as a marine plant, bearing crimson berries; nor can we wonder that he should have been led into this mistake when we find the error repeated almost down to our own times. In "Johnson's Dictionary" is the following definition:—"Coral—a plant of a great hardness and sticky nature while growing in the water as it is after long exposure to the air."

Coming down to the medieval age, the first mention we have of coral is in the inventory of Alianore de Bohun, where a paternoster of coral with gilded guarder, and three branches of coral, are among the list of valuables. Quite as many superstitious beliefs were then attached to this supposed submarine plant as in a more remote period.

In 1700 Courtoner described coral as a plant; and Reaumur declared it as his opinion, but slightly differing from former naturalists, that it was a stony product of marine plants. The Count di Marsigli went a step further, and not only asserted the vegetable nature of coral but declared that he had seen its flowers! In his work "La Physique de la Mer," he gives a representation of these sea blossoms, thus setting the question at rest forever, as he supposed. Others, however, were not quite so well satisfied; and Jean Andre de Peyssonel, a student of medicine and natural history, was deputed by the French Academie des Sciences to make further observations in elucidation of this interesting subject.

He began his examinations first in the neighborhood of Marseilles, and continued them on the north coast of Africa. At last, after long, exact, and delicate observation, he came to the conclusion that the Count di Marsigli's flowers were animals, and demonstrated that the coral was no plant, but the product of a colony of polypi.

Let him describe his experiment in his own words:—"I put the flower of the coral in vases full of sea-water, and I saw that what had been taken for the flower of this pretended plant was, in truth, only an insect like a little scabbard or polype. I had the pleasure of seeing move the claws or feet of the creature; and having put the vase full of water which contained the coral in a gentle heat over the fire, all the small insects seemed to expand. The polype extended his feet, and formed what M. di Marsigli and I had taken for the petals of a flower. The calyx of this pretended flower, in short, was the animal, which advanced and issued out of its shell."

But after all Peyssonel's labors he received neither reward nor thanks for his discovery; it was ridiculed by Reaumur and Bernard de Jussieu, as something quite unworthy of credit; and poor Peyssonel, meeting with nothing but skepticism and neglect—for his papers were not even printed—in return for his laborious investigations, abandoned the subject in disgust and departed for the Antilles in the capacity of naval surgeon.

Peyssonel was allowed to continue in the obscurity to which he had retired; but many years had not passed before both Reaumur and De Jussieu were obliged to retract their former opinion, and to acknowledge that after all Peyssonel's theory was correct.—The Argosy.

THE EUROPEAN COURIER. American travellers who have made the tour of Europe have either employed or encountered the Courier, and have studied his character with more or less prejudiced minds. He is a character, pretending to know all languages and everything honest when he must be honest, and a great scamp when he finds opportunity to give play to his scampish propensities. The following personal sketch of one of these curious fellows, a Swiss, and a model of his kind, is from a long chapter on Couriers, in a late number of the Pall Mall Gazette:—"What a goodsend M. Dieudonne used to be to those who were fortunate enough to secure him for their guide, friend, and philosopher! What a rare combination of gifts indicated him for eminence in the profession that nature inspired him to adopt! He was emphatically a self-made man, and yet the workmanship was unexceptionable. You were never surprised to surmise this fact, for his origin was a close secret of his own. Swiss by extraction, like most of his tribe, the youthful Louis early found his way from the mountains of the Valais to the streets of Geneva. From being a hanger-on in the courtly circles of the different hotels, he converted himself gradually into an occasional laquais de place. As became a free mountaineer, from the first he utterly emancipated himself from prejudices; always willing and always useful, his shrewd services were at the service of any one who chose to pay. He had excellent eyes for character, and as the patrons he was brought in contact with did not think it worth while playing the hypocrite with a lad of his years, his early studies in human nature were much easier to him by the distinctness of the point. Thus he developed the bump of acquisitiveness to the prejudice of his organs of veneration, while his common sense and common courtesy contained him to become an accomplished dissembler.

At last he caught the tide on the turn that carried him to fortune. A literary Englishman on his way from Italy to Paris retained him as his cicerone to Voltaire's Chateau de Ferney, and was thunderstruck at the acquaintance the out-at-elbows young Swiss displayed with the life and writings of the great philosopher. Louis, who was blessed with an admirable memory, was only airing his recollections of the conversation of a couple of days before. But he took good care not to let the cat out of the bag when his companion complimented him. Through life he knew when to speak and when to be silent. It ended by the Englishman carrying off his phoxin as a travelling servant. When he started Louis was as innocent as a babe of

the ways of the road, but he meditated profoundly on his future as the carriage dragged up the wooded zig-zags of the Jura. The result was his putting himself to school with the landlord, the postillions, his master, with any one who could teach, and with an air of such complacent self-sufficiency that they scarcely suspected he was learning. When the host of the Lion d'Or at Dijon showed himself backward with the black mail, M. Dieudonne was down upon him so sternly that the other fell upon his marrow-bone and humbly rendered up his own share of the pillage as a peace offering. When the pair arrived at Paris the master was so proud of his invaluable domestic that he could not help advertising his own perspicacity to all the world, declaring he considered it had suited him for life. The consequence was that M. Dieudonne forthwith bettered himself, finding an excellent place with a millionaire American family starting upon the tour of Europe.

VERSAILLES AND THE TRIANONS.—Versailles, for nearly a century and a half the habitual residence of the French court, dates from Louis XIII. Fond of hunting in the neighboring woods, he, or at least his courtiers, got tired of sleeping in a wayside inn or a windmill, and built at first a small pavilion, whose site is still pointed out. Afterward he wished for a real habitation, which grew and grew into what it is now. After the first revolution Versailles ceased to be the abode of Kings. The Convention made an inventory of the furniture and sold it. The Bonapartes never cared much about it. Napoleon I neglected Versailles, and called it St. Helena a "ville batarde," regretting even the small sums of money which he had spent in keeping up the palace. The vast museum it contains is in great measure the personal work of Louis Philippe. The Trianons are two miniature palaces or boxes, built as escapes from the heavy grandeur of Versailles, when its royal occupants happened to tire of their dignity. They are Le Grand Trianon and Le Petit Trianon; but at first sight you would say that the big one was the little one, and the little one the big one. The Grand Trianon, with the pride which apex humility, is only a rez-de-chausse, a ground floor, while the Petit Trianon has a basement, a first floor, and an attic, all outwardly visible. The delights of both are their gardens and pleasure-grounds. The two Trianons are to Versailles what Sir Walter Scott's hill cottage was to Abbotsford—a retreat to which he could retire, taking his work with him, and leaving Lady Scott to entertain the blue-bottles in the great house, and who, as Mr. Carlyle said, were really blue. This feeling that the Trianons were refuges of royalty is manifested by the fact that Charles X lingered there before his final departure into exile. Louis Philippe, too, after leaving St. Cloud forever, made a farewell halt at the Trianons. The last sovereign of France probably bade them no adieu, because he expected to revisit them in triumph and increase their treasures by some new trophy. Man proposes!—All the Year Round.

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TRIP ARRANGEMENT. Taken effect December 19, 1870. Fifteen Daily Trains leave Passenger Depot, corner of Berks and American streets (Sundays excepted), as follows: 7:00 A. M. (Accommodation) for Fort Washington.

At 7:30 A. M. (Express) for Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Williamsport, Mahanoy City, Hazleton, Pittston, Towanda, Waverly, Elmira, and in connection with the ERIE RAILWAY for Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Albany, Rochester, Chicago, San Francisco, and all points in the Great West.

At 8:45 A. M. (Accommodation) for Doylestown, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Williamsport, Mahanoy City, Hazleton, Pittston, Towanda, Waverly, Elmira, and in connection with the ERIE RAILWAY for Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Albany, Rochester, Chicago, San Francisco, and all points in the Great West.

At 9:30 P. M. (Accommodation) for Doylestown, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Williamsport, Mahanoy City, Hazleton, Pittston, Towanda, Waverly, Elmira, and in connection with the ERIE RAILWAY for Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Albany, Rochester, Chicago, San Francisco, and all points in the Great West.

PHILADELPHIA AND ERIE RAILROAD. On and after MONDAY, December 6, 1870, the trains on the Philadelphia and Erie Railroad will run as follows: WESTWARD. MAIL TRAIN leaves Philadelphia 7:45 A. M.

ERIE EXPRESS leaves Philadelphia 12:40 P. M. ELMIRA MAIL leaves Philadelphia 6:30 P. M. MAIL TRAIN leaves Erie 7:00 A. M.

ERIE EXPRESS leaves Erie 10:05 P. M. ELMIRA MAIL leaves Erie 6:30 P. M. MAIL TRAIN leaves Erie 7:00 A. M.

PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD. Depot, Thirteenth and Callowhill Streets. For further notice trains will leave and arrive as follows: TRAINS LEAVE. A. M. TRAINS ARRIVE. A. M.

TRAIN LEAVE. A. M. TRAINS ARRIVE. A. M. TRAIN LEAVE. P. M. TRAINS ARRIVE. P. M.

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CAMDEN AND AMBOY AND PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANIES. HOLIDAY EXCURSION FOR NEW YORK.

EXCURSION TICKETS. FOUR DOLLARS FOR THE ROUND TRIP. Will be sold from Philadelphia for all trains of 23d, 24th, and 25th December, good to return from New York December 26, 27, or 28, by any of the trains.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 22, 1870. 12 23 24r 1870.—FOR NEW YORK.—THE CAMDEN AND AMBOY AND PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON RAILROAD COMPANIES' LINES FROM PHILADELPHIA TO NEW YORK AND WAY PLACES.

At 7 A. M. Mail and Accommodation, via Camden and Amboy, and at 8:30 P. M., Accommodation, via Camden and Jersey City, Trenton, and Philadelphia, for Amboy and intermediate stations.

At 7 A. M. and 8:30 P. M. for Freehold and Farmingdale, and at 10 A. M., 12 M., 2 P. M., 5 P. M. for Trenton.

At 7 A. M., 10 A. M., 12 M., 2 P. M., 5 P. M., 7 P. M., and 11:30 P. M. for Bordentown, Florence, Burlington, Edgewater, Beverly, Delanco, Riverside, Riverton, and Fairbury.

At 7 A. M., 10 A. M., 12 M., 2 P. M., 5 P. M., 7 P. M., and 11:30 P. M. for Fish House, Newark, Jersey City, and Philadelphia.

At 7:30 P. M. Line leaves from Market Street Ferry for New York. From West Philadelphia Depot. At 7:30 and 9:45 A. M., 1:30, 3:45, 5:45, and 12 P. M., New York Express Lines, and at 11:30 P. M., Local Express Lines, for New York.

At 7:30 and 9:45 A. M., 1:30, 3:45, 5:45, and 12 P. M. for Trenton. At 11:30 P. M. for Bristol.

At 12 P. M. (night) for Morrisville, Tullytown, Schenck, Edlington, Cornwall, Torresdale, Holmesburg Junction, Tacony, Wissinoming, and Philadelphia.

At 7:30 A. M., 9:30, 11:30, and 6 P. M. for Trenton and Bristol, and at 9:30 A. M. and 6 P. M. for Bristol.

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