

## THE DECORATING SPIDER CRAB.

A. W. ROBERTS.

Society and occupation in the world of the sea are represented by masons, builders, marauders, usurpers, and plunderers, and all have their distinguishing peculiarities. A fancy of the quaint spider crab, or "dandy crab," as he is sometimes called, is to decorate himself with algae and sponges; and none but the most brilliant in color seem to please him; this, however, not for vain display, but, primarily at least, for personal protection. He moves about "slowly and solemn," and is deliberate in decision and determined in purpose; his hard, spiny shell, of somber color, adds to the dignity of his appearance, and the methodical way in which he uses his claws and carries himself about, really impresses one with the idea that he is quite an important personage in the aquarium.

When wishing to array himself he finds a brilliant algae or sponge, and pinches off piece after piece with his long, slender claws; these, when broken, are dipped in a glutinous fluid contained in the mouth, and are carried to the back and fastened securely. Sometimes after he has attached a particular fragment, he reaches back his claw a second time to satisfy himself that it is secure.

This practice is indulged in only when the crabs are young, and in the fall, and its object is to obscure the crab from hungry sturgeons and skates. When placed in a tank with many animals the crabs take the same precaution against possible enemies, and often cover themselves.

Full-grown crabs are too large and hard to be swallowed, and are seldom seen fastening seaweeds to their backs, as they no longer have need of such protective covering.

There is an old mill race on Long Island where many of these crabs have been carried among sponge-covered rocks whence they cannot return. Dainty bits of red and yellow sponges have been attached to their backs, which have grown so as to nearly cover them. When in motion the crabs look like moving sponges. Although much preferring brilliant algae and sponges, the spider-crab will, for lack of them, make use of other material. Not long ago a tank was cleaned in the aquarium, and a spider crab was confined in one corner with a pane of glass. I threw in sprays of sertularia and bits of the bases of anemones. These were eagerly seized by the crab and attached to his back. In course of time the bits of anemones developed into perfect animals, and remained on the shell till the crab reached the period of casting.

The spiders cast their shells like the rest of crabdom, but unlike other varieties have no attendant to protect them when soft. Two that were nearly ready to shed in one of the tanks at the aquarium, suddenly broke loose from their shells on the tank's receiving a sudden jar. The crabs are less pugnacious than the hermit and other crabs, appearing to quarrel only over their food. They have keen appetites and good noses for scenting food. I have often amused visitors at the aquarium by holding a dead minnow in my hand. The crabs would assemble from all parts of the tank, and climb up my arm and cluster about my hand in numbers in search of the minnow, after having fierce contests with one another.

More curious than this is the fact that they will deliberately seat themselves on the largest sized anemone when feeding, and with their claws will deliberately take the food out of the stomach of the anemone.

I have often seen the spider crab attack a scallop in open shell. The scallop would close suddenly and hold the crab captive for several hours.

There is a specimen of the long-armed spider crab of Japan in the cabinet of Rutgers College, N. J., which measures, when the limbs are extended, eleven feet and six inches. This variety is the largest known.

## THE PAINTED TURTLE.

C. FEW SEISS.

The painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta* (Herm.), Gray) may be found in many of our ponds, lakes, creeks, and rivers, from New Brunswick to Georgia. A naturalist says: "It inhabits stagnant ponds or lakes, and is never found in rivers or running streams." This is an error. I have seen it and seen it captured in the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, and also in various creeks of running water.

In Pennsylvania, April is the month in which it generally

awakens from its winter nap, and quits its dark dormitory of mud to enjoy the spring sunshine. It may sometimes be seen floating on the surface of the water, with legs extended, and its head just partly drawn within its shell, but sinks quickly at your near approach.

It is generally supposed that turtles do not have a note or song, or produce any sound except a hiss, given when the head is suddenly drawn back within the carapace. But the painted turtle has a love song which he often sings during May. It is something like the shrill note of the toad, but cannot well be described. About the first of June the female quits the water and digs a hole in the ground, in which she deposits her eggs. They then appear to receive no more attention, but are hatched by the temperature of

The painted turtle may be recognized by its smooth carapace, the large plates of which are dark olive or greenish black, margined with yellow, and the marginal plates with internally red markings. The plastron (under shell) is of a bright yellow color; sometimes, though rarely, it has a few dark spots. The head is black, with two or more spots on the sides; the neck marked with yellow lines. The legs are streaked with red and black. When full grown it measures from six to eight inches.

## The Education of Wild Beasts.

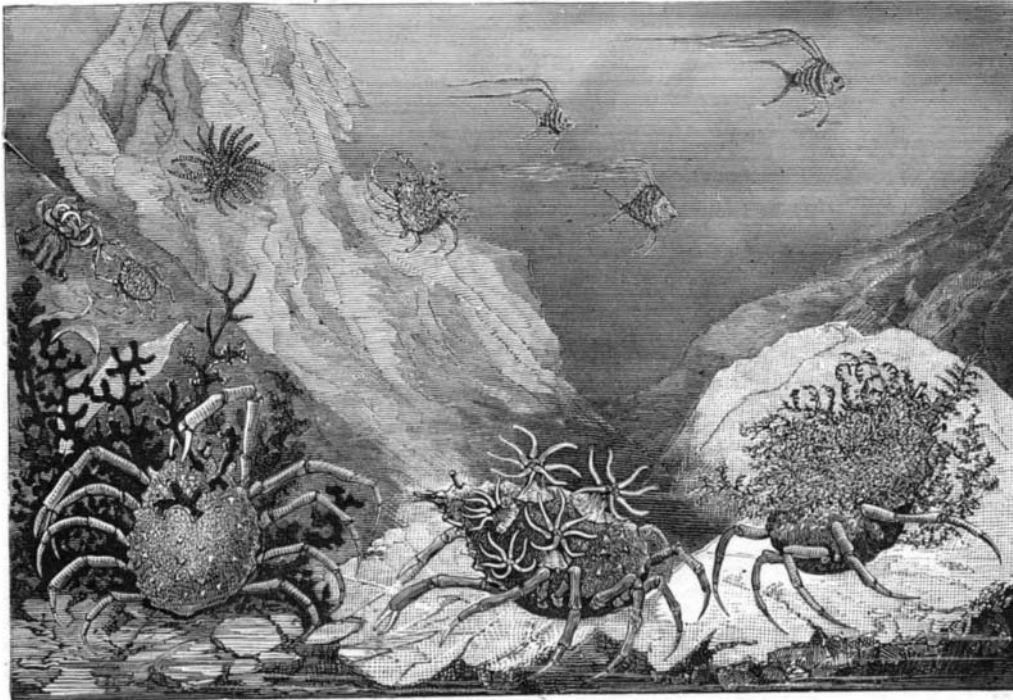
The veteran animal tamer, Alfred Still, says that too much whipping makes a wild animal sulky and vicious, but a certain amount of whipping is necessary. To train a

wild beast, he said recently, you must "first make its acquaintance from the outside of the cage, and get the animal acquainted with your face; but, above all, with your voice. They become accustomed to voices sooner than faces, and are governed more by sound than by sight. Having got accustomed to your beasts, and they accustomed to you, your next step is to train them to their tricks. Though these tricks are simple, they require a great deal of time and patience and a good deal of whipping to accomplish them. The lions are the smartest of the wild beasts. You can train a lion to do the ordinary tricks of the trade: jumping through hoops and over gates, standing on his hind legs, and so on—in about five weeks' constant work. It will require about a week longer to teach a lioness, and a leopard, which comes next to a lion in intelligence, about six weeks to learn the same feats. It takes about seven or eight weeks to teach a tiger, and a tigress from eight to nine weeks, while you can keep on beating and teaching a hyena for four months

before you can do much with him. The most difficult thing to do is to teach a wild beast to let you lie down on him without his trying to make you lie in him by eating you up. Kindness—that is, anything but ordinary civility—is absolutely thrown away upon a wild beast. With a tiger or tigress especially all affection is literally wasted. A tigress is as likely to eat you up after an intimate acquaintance of six years as one of six weeks. As a rule, the whip is the most efficacious instrument for training. It can be used quickly and it hurts. If I were to drop my whip the beasts would fancy I had lost all my power over them and would pounce first on the whip and then go for me. The four tigresses trained in that cage are estimated to be worth \$32,000; but a good tiger, unbroken, is not worth more than \$2,500. Lions are worth about \$2,000 to \$2,500 each; panthers, \$600; jaguars, \$400; hyenas, \$250, if untrained; leopards, \$250 to \$400, according to their kind."

## Wild Pigeons in Michigan.

A correspondent of the *Detroit Post*, writing from Traverse, Mich., April 24, says that the biennial flight of pigeons to the woods of Northern Michigan began the latter part of March. These birds on their journeyings from the South to the far North stop every two years for two or three nestings in Michigan, usually coming in immense numbers. On the alternate years, when beech nuts are not abundant in this State, they take some other course in their northward flight. Formerly their first nesting was in Allegan or Ottawa county. Of late they have generally settled first in Shelby, Oceana county, and later in the season in Benzie and Emmet counties. Two years ago they skipped both Oceana and Benzie counties and nested first in Emmet, near Petoskey. This year their first flight was to the same section, but they soon discovered that they had been fooled by the warm weather further south. The weather about Petoskey was still cold, the bay was frozen over, the snow was deep in the woods, the prospect for good feeding was bad, and after a day or two of apparent irresolution and many erratic flights the birds, as if by common consent, took their course to the neighborhood of Platte River in Benzie county. As a local publication stated at the

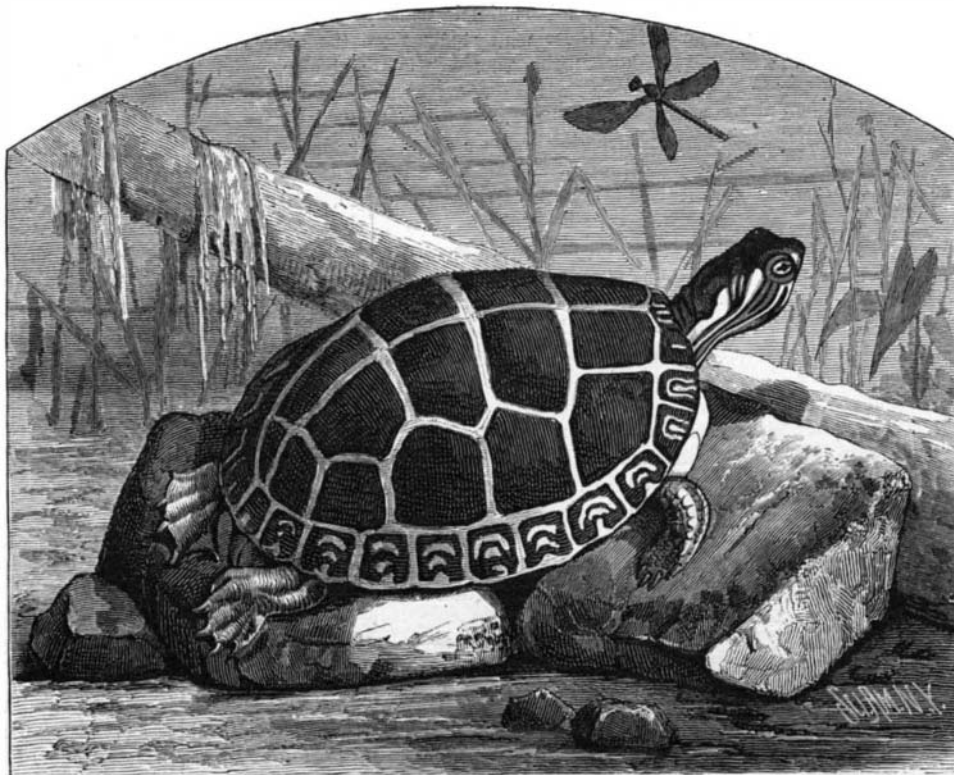


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the soil. The young turtles make for the water as soon as hatched. They are truly pretty little things: indeed I may call them "real 'cute."

I cannot say what this turtle principally feeds upon in a wild state, but in captivity it devours meat, fish, tadpoles, earth worms, and also berries.

The painted turtle, though not considered eatable, is nevertheless sold along with several other turtles, and figures as a "diamond-back" in the famous terrapin supper. Indeed in some seasons there are more wood turtles (*Chelopus insculptus*, Le Conte) and red-bellied turtles (*Pseudemys rugosa*, Shaw) sold in the Philadelphia markets than edible salt water terrapins or diamond-backs (*Malacoclemmys palustris*, Gmel., Gray). The game dealers call the female turtles "cows," and ask higher prices for them than the "bulls," as they are generally fatter, and often contain eggs. I examined a netful of terrapins at a game store a week or two



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ago, and found them all to be of the *rugosa* species. Many of them were dead, and two were so "very dead" that their eyes had dried up and sunk deeply into their sockets. And yet the wily caterer will buy them and stew them with wine and spices, and the epicure will smack his lips over this reptilian carrion, and exclaim, "How delicious!"

time, "they came in clouds, millions upon millions. It seemed as if the entire world of pigeons was concentrating at this point. The air was full of them and the sun shut out of sight, and still they came, millions upon millions more." They spread over an area of more than fifteen miles in length and six to eight miles wide, and the prospect for a time was