

## LESSON LVII.

## THE NAUTILUS.\*

Nau-ti-lus	fur-nish-ed	mar-i-ner
ruf-fle	At-lan-tic	tran-qui
in-ha-bi-tant	del-i-ca-cy	float-ing
Me-di-ter-ra-ne-an	mem-brane	

The Nautilus, or more properly the *Paper Nautilus* (for so it is called on account of the delicacy of its shell), is an inhabitant of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, where, in calm and bright weather, its thin beautiful shell may be seen floating on the surface of the water, with its tiny sails spread to catch the breeze. As the animal is not fastened to the shell like the oyster and other shell fish, it can quit or enter its shell at pleasure. It is furnished with several long feelers, or arms, which it uses as oars, when sailing on the water, and two of these arms have a thin piece of skin attached to them, like the web on the feet of ducks and geese. These are the sails of this curious little creature; and by means of its oars and sails it can move over the surface of a calm sea; and

\* It is now ascertained that the account usually given of the Nautilus, though generally believed, is altogether fabulous. Mr. Patterson, in his "Introduction to Zoology," has the following observations on this subject:—"It moves backwards through the water by the action of its arms, like other Cuttle-fish. It can creep along the bottom, and, like many other Mollusks, it can rise to the surface; but there the arms are never employed as oars; and those which have the broad expanded membranous disc are never used as sails. Their true function, as ascertained by M. Rang, and confirmed by the experiments of Madame Power, is the secretion of the substance of the shell. They are stretched tensely over its surface, and, when accidental injuries arise, they deposit for its repair the needful quantity of shelly matter. To do this, and to supply what is wanted for the enlargement of the shell with the growth of the animal, is their appointed duty; one similar to that of the mantle of the bivalve shells."