

fort and support the moment they are born.

For the battle of life the Author of Nature has equipped them with lancets, probes, gimlets, augurs, saws, etc., and accorded to them the skill of nurses, architects, ladies' maids, masons, carpenters, miners, and so on.

In truth, there is no end to the marvels they reveal, and, putting aside the inborn love we possess for all things created, insects must ever appeal to us with "mute though eloquent tongues" to reflect upon the many and beautiful lessons their life-work suggests, and evermore refrain from looking with horror or disgust upon any member of their "unnumbered multitude," which with the most superficial study is capable of imparting a loftier conception of life than we have hitherto held.

The life history of the following is from personal observation, and may serve to illustrate the design of my remarks.

### THE MANTIS.

The maternal solicitude of the mantis guides her to choose and fix upon some well-favoured leaf or branch to attach her frothy egg-cabin to; and she so effectually renders it a dwelling of safety for her brood, that I'm sure a bird would scorn to touch such an unsavoury-looking structure.

For, five, six, and nine months, according to the time of construction, which may be from the early days of summer until the late ones of mid-winter, it stands the wear and tear of the rain, the sun and the wind before the little tenants prepare to remove and brave the dangers of their heritage. It is as pretty a sight as there is in Nature, to watch them cast off the trammels of their cradle. A little perforation from within heralds the flitting, and soon two tiny black eyes come through, guiding a green, slender form with fairy limbs, all daintily enveloped in white gossamer apparel; as the wee thing slowly rises

to the delicate task of divesting itself of its encumbrances, the two thread-like antennae have first to be gently and carefully withdrawn from their filmy sheaths, and in turn, the six legs and body tenderly pressed off. Not in haste, but by degrees, it is relieved of its "clo,"



1 Mantis fashioning her egg cabin

2. Egg cabin of a Mantis.

which are left hanging to the orifice, as the quivering, wingless midget steps forth.

It is no unusual sight to see twenty-five to thirty-five emerge from one cabin, and move about in a bright, quick way, as if conscious of their freedom and the glory of the sunlight. Their hunting propensities are straightway uppermost, and a mimic warfare begins among themselves if nothing better is at hand. Contrary to the general rule, these insects resemble their parents from birth; they are active from the beginning to the end, undergoing only a trifling change, such as a larger growth and a few new skins, till the budding wings appear and develop to perfection.

When mature, their outer wings are so like a stiff green leaf, that one can hardly help mistaking them for one; but hidden beneath those stiff ones are a daintier pair (only unfurled for flying) in diaphanous folds of tender green, and radiating