

# The Story of My Life by "Billie Button"

CHAPTER II. Here you meet the Glochidium.

Don't be afraid of his name.

He is harmless

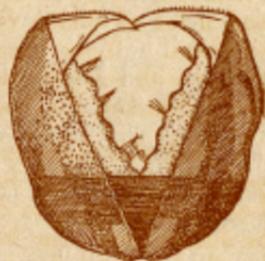
**M**AYBE the next clam you investigate will have no eggs at all—then you can gamble that it is a father clam, useful, but with a history that, as Kipling says, "is another story."

Number three opens up differently. The brood pouch is full, but not of eggs. Instead you'll see, if you look closely, myriads of little embryo clams or glochidia (how these professors do love to parade their Latin). These glochidia are hatched from the eggs in the brood pouch, but remain there, packed snug and tight, for periods of from a few weeks to several months, according to the particular kind of clam from which they spring. The glochidium is tiny, of course, and its shell is soft, but it has all the essential features of the adult clam, and in the brood pouch of the old mother clam its organs develop and it grows up toward perfect clamhood.

Now drop the rest of your clams into the bottom of your boat, row off down stream and try your luck as an angler. If fate is kind and bait attractive, you'll land a brace of rock bass or a sheepshead—at worst you can count on pulling in a few sunfish.

What has that to do with clams?  
Let's see.

Take a close look at that fish you caught last. Along its fins and gills you will find little rough humps and bunches—all closed over with "skin." Don't be suspicious. Mr. Fish isn't diseased—these are not boils or bunions, but another step in the life history of the clam, and a shining example of Dame Nature's way of caring for her helpless children.



A GLOCHIDIUM

When you open these bunches you will find that each contains a glochidium just like one of those you saw in the clam's brood pouch a half hour back, only a little better developed. You have stumbled on the clam in its "parasitic" stage.

