

ing to greater depths in winter. The spawning females usually repair to shallow places in the summer, the higher temperatures being better suited to the development of the eggs and larvæ.

Several of the strange mask crabs (*Hyas*, see Fig. 337, *Stenorhynchus*, *Inachus*) also inhabit the littoral zone, chiefly where the bottom is overgrown with algæ, bryozoans, and hydroids, being rarely met with upon sandy bottom. They are supplied with small hooks on the carapace and extremities, by which they attach to themselves the algæ or animal-colonies around them. These crabs are extremely sluggish and inactive, and they derive an advantage from this remarkable habit, since they are difficult to distinguish from their surroundings, and consequently they can conceal themselves from their prey as well as from their enemies.



FIG. 337.  
*Hyas araneus*, L.

Sandy bottom  
in the unex-  
posed littoral  
zone.

The bottom here chiefly consists of what has been called shell-sand, made up entirely of shell-

fragments of molluscs, echinoderms, balanids and other creatures; it is usual to make a distinction between the coarse and the fine shell-sand. This detritus is practically only met with in the littoral zone of the skerries, and is undoubtedly due to the action of the waves and breakers. Burrowing forms, for the most part mussels, spatangids, clypeastrids, and worms, predominate. The lancelet (*Amphioxus*) also makes this its principal home. The loose formation is burrowed into quite easily, and a lancelet can work its way down in the course of a few seconds.<sup>1</sup> We must also include the sand-eels (*Ammodytes*) amongst the vertebrate forms that burrow in this sandy bottom, though they are somewhat local in their occurrence.

<sup>1</sup> This form burrows in a curving direction beneath the surface of the sand, finally protruding its head very slightly a short distance from where it went in, and remaining stationary in this position.