

permeated with the mineral substance termed sulphuret of iron, or pyrites. Many were so brittle as to fall to pieces upon being handled, but others were of a stony hardness, and I quickly filled a handkerchief with my newly discovered treasures, and hastened home to examine them at leisure. They consisted of the usual kinds of fossil fruits so abundant in the island (see *Lign.* 42 and 43, p. 178.), with casts of shells, and a few claws of crabs, and teeth of fishes.

Most of the specimens fell to pieces in the course of three or four months, but a few were durable, and these still occupy a corner in my cabinet as precious mementos of my juvenile researches. Many years afterwards I revisited Sheppey, and made a large collection of its fossils, which is now in the British Museum. Of late years, the increasing taste for Palæontology has brought numerous visitors to the island, which steam navigation has now placed within a few hours distance of the metropolis; and the demand for choice fossils has given rise to several local dealers. The student may, with but little trouble or expense, visit the island, make himself familiar with its geological character, and return laden with the fruits of the ancient spice islands, of whose ruins this mass of clay, in the embouchure of the Thames, is almost wholly composed. As it is some years since I last visited this interesting spot, I have obtained, as a Cicerone for the reader, the most indefatigable and