

genera,—some of them in scarce less perfect keeping than when they spread out their many-jointed arms in quest of prey amid the ancient seas. It contains, however, none of the vertebral remains furnished by the celebrated bone-bed of the Upper Ludlow rocks, nor any of the ichthyolitic fragments found still lower down; though, of course, one misses them all the more from the completeness of the collection in contemporary organisms; and its group of Old Red Sandstone fossils serves but to contrast the organic poverty of this system in its development in England, with the vast fossil riches which it exhibits in our northern division of the island. The neighboring coal-field I found well represented by a series of plants and ichthyolites; and I had much pleasure in examining, among the latter, one of the best preserved specimens of *Megalichthys* yet found,—a specimen disinterred some years ago from out an ironstone bed near Walsall, known to the miners as the “gubbin iron.” The head is in a remarkably fine state of keeping: the strong enamelled plates, resembling pieces of japanned mail, occupy their original places; they close round the snout as if tightly riveted down, and lie nicely inlaid in patterns of great regularity on the broad forehead; the surface of each is finely punctulated, as if by an exceedingly minute needle; most of them bear, amid the smaller markings, eyelet-like indentations of larger size, ranged in lines, as if they had been half-perforated for ornament by a tin-worker’s punch; and the *tout ensemble* is that of the head of some formidable reptile encased in armor of proof: though, from the brightly burnished surface of the plates, the armature resembles rather that of some of the more brilliant insects, than that common to fishes or reptiles. The occipital covering of the crocodile is perhaps more than equally strong, but it lacks the glossy japan, and the tilt-yard cast, if I may so speak, of the many-jointed head-