

THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE ASTEROLEPIS.

ITS FAMILY.

It had been long known to the continental naturalists, that in certain Russian deposits, very extensively developed, there occur in considerable abundance certain animal organisms; but for many years neither their position nor character could be satisfactorily determined. By some they were placed too high in the scale of organized being; by others too low. Kutorga, a writer not very familiarly known in this country, described the remains as those of mammals;—the Russian rocks contained, he said, bones of quadrupeds, and, in especial, the teeth of swine: whereas Lamarck, a better known authority, though not invariably a safe one,—for he had a trick of dreaming when wide awake, and of calling his dreams philosophy,—assigned to them a place among the corals. They belonged, he asserted, as shown by certain star-like markings with which they are fretted, to the *Polyparia*. He even erected for their reception a new genus of *Astrea*, which he designated, from the little rounded hillock which rises in the middle of each star, the genus *Monticularia*. It was left to a living naturalist, M. Eichwald, to fix their true position zoologically among the class of fishes, and to Sir Roderick Murchison to determine their position geologically as ichthyolites of the Old Red Sandstone.