

and the plate in the opposite page, occurred, — for its general form is different, (fig. 37,) — there appear well-marked ligamentary impressions closely resembling that little spongy pit in the head of the human thigh-bone to which what is termed the round ligament is attached. The entire hyoid-plate, viewed on its outer side, resembles in form the hyoid-bone, — or cartilage rather, — of the spotted dog-fish, (*Scyllium stellare*;) but its area was at least a hundred times more extensive than in the largest *Scyllium*, and, like all the dermal plates of the *Asterolepis*, it was thickly fretted by the characteristic tubercles. In the Ray, as in the Sharks, the piece of thin cartilage of which this plate seems the homologue, is a flat, semi-transparent disk; and there is no part of the animal in which the progress of those bony molecules which encrust the internal framework may be more distinctly traced, as if in the act of creeping over what they cover, in slim threads or shooting points, — and much resembling new ice creeping in a frosty evening over the surface of a pool.

That suite of shoulder-bones that in the osseous fishes forms the belt or frame on which the opercules rest, and furnishes the base of the pectorals, was represented in the *Asterolepis*, as in the sturgeon, by a ring of strong osseous plates, which, in one of the two species of which trace is to be found among the rocks of Thurso, were curiously fretted on their external surfaces, and in the other species comparatively smooth. The largest, or coracoidian plate of the ring, as it occurs in the more ornate species, (fig. 38,) might be readily enough mistaken, when seen with only its surface exposed,

Fig. 37.



NAIL-LIKE
BONE OF HYOID
PLATE.
(One half nat.
size.)