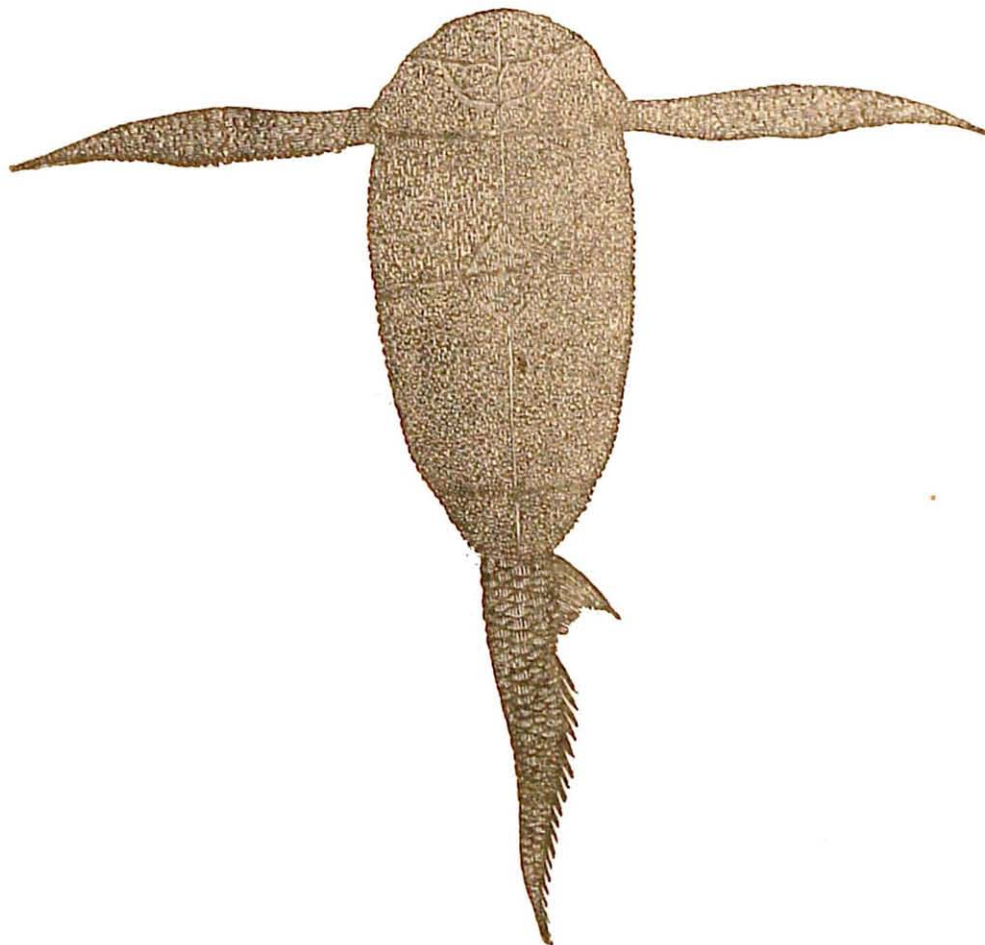


Fig. 57.



PTERIOTHYS OBLONGUS.

One-half nat. size.

still. It would almost seem as if some such law influenced the destiny of genera in this ichthyic class as that which we find so often exemplified in our own species. The dwarf, or giant, or deformed person, is seldom a long liver; all the more remarkable instances of longevity have been furnished by individuals cast in the ordinary mould and proportions of the species. Not a few of these primordial Ganoids were, however, of the highest rank and standing ever exemplified by their class; and we find Agassiz boldly assigning a reason for their superiority to their successors, important for the fact which it embodies, and worthy, as coming from him, of our most respectful attention. "It is plain," we find him saying, "that before the class of reptiles was introduced upon