

perhaps, the clothing of its lower or abdominal parts. But the most remarkable and unexpected feature of this little creature was the beautiful and ornate scaly covering of its back and sides. Modern Batrachians are characteristically naked, and though we know that some fossil species had coverings below of bony scales, these seemed rather to ally them with bony fishes. One of the specimens of *Hylonomus* had associated with it a quantity of crumpled shining skin, black and carbonaceous, and which may perhaps have been tanned and so preserved by the water filling the hollow tree impregnated with solution of tannin from the bark. This skin was covered with minute overlapping scales, which, under the microscope, showed the structure of horn rather than of bone. Besides these ordinary scales there were bony prominences, like those of the horned frog, on the back and shoulders, and a species of epaulettes made of long horny bristles curved downward, and apparently placed at the edges of the shoulders. Besides these there were in front and at the side rows of pendants or lappets, all no doubt ornamented with colouring, though now perfectly black. It may be asked what was the use of the ornate covering, and perhaps the question raises that perplexing problem, of the use of beauty in a world where there were no animals with higher æsthetic faculties than those of Batrachians. Scudder suggests a somewhat prosaic use in supposing them to be an armour against the venomous scorpions which were the contemporaries of these little reptiles, and some of them almost as large in size. But the word "venomous" raises another question, for we only infer that the scorpions were venomous from modern analogy and traces of an inflated joint at the end of the tail in some specimens. We have no absolute certainty that the subtle and complex organic poison of the scorpion, and his beautiful injection syringe for placing it under the skin, were perfected at this early time. Thus we have in the far back Carboniferous age a creature as