

velopes it. Mr. Sanderson was, however, surprised to find that the bone of the *Asterolepis* still retained its elasticity, and was scarce less liable, when heated, to start from the glass,—a peculiarity through which he at first lost several preparations. I have seen a human bone that had for ages been partially embedded in a mass of adipocere, partially enveloped in the common mould of a churchyard, exhibit two very different styles of keeping. In the adipocere it was as fresh and green as if it had been divested of the integuments only a few weeks previous; whereas the portion which projected into the mould had become brittle and porous, and presented the ordinary appearance of an old churchyard bone. And what the adipocere had done for the human bone in this case, seems to have been done for the bones of the *Asterolepis* by the animal bitumen.

The size of the *Asterolepis* must, in the larger specimens, have been very great. In all those ganoidal fishes of the Old Red Sandstone that had the head covered with osseous plates, we find that the cranial buckler bore a certain definite proportion,—various in the several genera and species,—to the length of the body. The drawing-master still teaches his pupils to regulate the proportions of the human figure by the seven head-lengths which it contains; and perhaps shows them how an otherwise meritorious draftsman,* much employed half an age ago in drawing for the wood-engraver, used to render his figures squat and ungraceful by making them a head too short. Now, those ancient Ganoids which possessed a cranial buckler may, we find, be also measured by head-lengths. Thus, in the *Coccosteus decipiens*, the length of the cranial buckler from nape to snout equalled

* The late Mr. John Thurston.