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Terrible Lizard : The First Dinosaur Hunters and the Birth of a New Science

By Cadbury, Deborah

Henry Holt & Co, New York, New York, U.S.A., 2001. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. This is the first USA edition. 374 pages. In 1812 a twelve-year-old girl named Mary Anning was collecting fossils for her father beneath the cliffs of Dorset when she discovered the outline of a lizardlike skeleton embedded in the limestone. Working with a small hammer, she unearthed a giant prehistoric animal seventeen feet in length. News of her discovery baffled scholars and attracted the attention of the Reverend William Buckland, and eccentric Oxford naturalist known for his interest in geology or "undergroundology," as he called it. Buckland eagerly used Mary's find and other remnant fossils to set in motion a quest to understand the world before Noah's flood, though his inquiry was in fact an attempt to prove the accuracy of the biblical record (the scriptures alone were the key to understanding history in his view, and fossils were interpreted in this context). Meanwhile, another naturalist, Gideon Mantell, a poor country doctor, uncovered giant petrified bones in a Sussex quarry and became obsessed with the ancient past that, he came to realize, must once have been teeming with creatures up to seventy...



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