

it possessed a neck of enormous length, a body of moderate size, with four paddles, resembling those of turtles, and a very short tail. They were both marine, air-breathing, cold-blooded, carnivorous, vertebrate animals; swarming in prodigious numbers during the secondary epochs, and particularly in the seas of the Liassic period. In both genera the construction of the skeleton presents many important variations from all known recent types; and should be carefully investigated by the student, who will find in the Reports of Professor Owen all the information that can be desired.*

It will suffice for our present purpose to point out a few important and obvious characters.

In the Ichthyosaurus, the nasal apertures or openings of the nostrils are not towards the snout, as in the Crocodile, but near the anterior angle of the orbit, approaching, in this respect, some of the recent lizards. The orbit is very large, and the sclerotic coat, or capsule of the eye, has, in front, an annular series of bony plates (*Bd.* pl. 10, figs. 1, 3.), which often occur in their natural position.† This structure is not possessed by fishes, but is analogous to that observable in the eyes of turtles, lizards, and many birds; as for example, in the owl and eagle: it confers on the eye additional power of adapta-

* The Penny Cyclopædia, Art. PLESIOSAURUS, contains an able abstract of these Reports.

† The osseous plates of the sclerotica are beautifully displayed in many of the specimens in the British Museum.