

beheld, sleep the sleep of stones. The quarries of Lyme Regis form the cemetery of the Ichthyosauri ; the sepulchre where lie interred these dragons of the ancient seas.

In 1811 a country girl, who made her precarious living by picking up fossils for which the neighbourhood was famous, was pursuing her avocation, hammer in hand, when she perceived some bones projecting a little out of the cliff. Finding, on examination, that it was part of a large skeleton, she cleared away the rubbish, and laid bare the whole creature imbedded in the block of stone. She hired workmen to dig out the block of Lias in which it was buried. In this manner was the first of these monsters brought to light : "a monster some thirty feet long, with jaws nearly a fathom in length, and huge

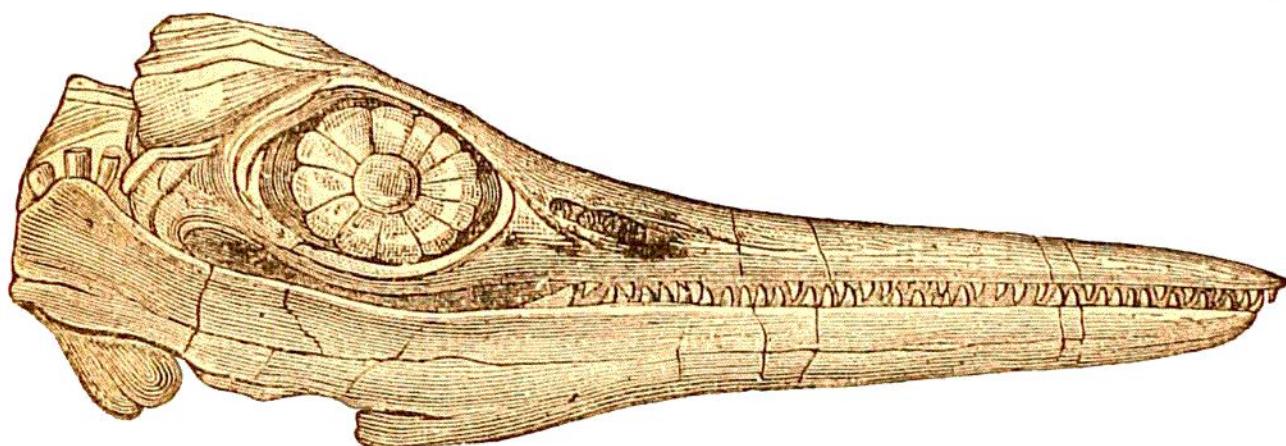


Fig. 95.—Head of *Ichthyosaurus platydon*.

saucer-eyes ; which have since been found so perfect, that the petrified lenses have been split off and used as magnifiers," as a writer in *All the Year Round* assures us.

In Fig. 95 the head of *I. platydon* is represented. As in the Saurians, the openings of the nostrils are situated near the anterior angle of the orbits of the eyes, while those of the Crocodile are near the snout ; but, on the other hand, in its osteology and its mode of dentition it nearly resembles the Crocodile ; the teeth are pointed and conical—not, however, set in deep or separate sockets, but only implanted in a long and deep continuous groove hollowed in the bones of the jaw. These strong jaws have an enormous opening ; for, in some instances, they have been found eight feet in length and armed with 160 teeth. Let us add that teeth lost through the voracity of the animal, or in contests with other animals, could be renewed