

covery baffled all the science of the naturalists, at a period when the knowledge of these ancient beings was still in its infancy. One saw in it the head of a Crocodile ; another, that of a Whale ; memoirs and monographs rained down, without throwing much light on the subject. It required all the efforts of Adrian Camper, joined to those of the immortal Cuvier, to assign its true zoological place to the Maestricht animal. The controversy over this fine fossil engaged the attention of the learned for the remainder of the last century and far into the present.

Maestricht is a city of the Netherlands, built on the banks of the Meuse. At the gates of this city, in the hills which skirt the left or western bank of the river, there rises a solid mass of cretaceous formation known as Saint Peter's Rocks. In composition these beds correspond with the Meudon chalk beds, and they contain similar fossils. The quarries are about 100 feet deep, consisting in the upper part of twenty feet abounding in corals and Polyzoa, succeeded by fifty feet of soft yellowish limestone, furnishing a fine building stone, which has been quarried from time immemorial, and extends up to the environs of Liège ; this is succeeded by a few inches of greenish soil with Encrinites, and then by a very white chalk with layers of flints. The quarry is filled with marine fossils, often of great size.

These fossil remains, naturally enough, attracted the attention of the curious, and led many to visit the quarries ; but of all the discoveries which attracted attention the greatest interest attached to the gigantic animal under consideration. Among those interested by the discovery of these strange vestiges was an officer of the garrison of Maestricht, named Drouin. He purchased the bones of the workmen as the pick disengaged them from the rock, and concluded by forming a collection in Maestricht, which was spoken of with admiration. In 1766, the trustees of the British Museum, hearing of this curiosity, purchased it, and had it removed to London. Incited by the example of Drouin, Hoffmann, the surgeon of the garrison, set about forming a similar collection, and his collection soon exceeded that of Drouin's Museum in riches. It was in 1780 that he purchased of the quarrymen the magnificent fossil head, exceeding six feet in length, which has since so exercised the sagacity of naturalists.

Hoffman did not long enjoy the fruits of his precious prize, however ; the chapter of the church of Maestricht claimed, with more or less foundation, certain rights of property ; and in spite of all protest, the head of the *Crocodile of Maestricht*, as it was already called, passed into the hands of the Dean of the Chapter, named Goddin.