

witnessed the shock given to the head of a Crocodile, by the act of snapping together its thin long jaws, must have seen how liable to fracture the lower jaw would be, were it composed of one bone only on each side: a similar inconvenience would have attended the same simplicity of structure in the jaw of the Ichthyosaurus. In each case, therefore, the splicing and bracing together of six thin flat bones of unequal length, and of varying thickness, on both sides of the lower jaw, affords compensation for the weakness and risk of fracture, that would otherwise have attended the elongation of the snout.

Mr. Conybeare points out a further beautiful contrivance in the lower jaw of the Ichthyosaurus, analogous to the cross bracings lately introduced in naval architecture, (see Pl. 11, Fig. 2.)\*

### *Vertebræ.*

The vertebral column in the Ichthyosaurus was composed of more than one hundred joints; and

\* The coronoid bone, (x) is interposed between the dental, (u), and opercular (&), its fibres having a slanting direction, whilst those of the two latter bones are disposed horizontally; thus, the strength of the part is greatly increased by a regular diagonal bracing, without the least addition of weight or bulk; a similar structure may be noticed in the overlapping bones of the heads of fish, and in a less degree, in those of Turtles.—Geol. Trans. Lond. Vol. V. p. 565, and Vol. I. N. S. p. 112.