

SECTION V.

INTESTINAL STRUCTURE OF ICHTHYOSAURUS
AND OF FOSSIL FISHES.

FROM the teeth and organs of locomotion, we come next to consider those of digestion in the Ichthyosaurus. If there be any point in the structure of extinct fossil animals, as to which it should have seemed hopeless to discover any kind of evidence, it is the form and arrangement of the intestinal organs; since these soft parts, though of prime importance in the animal economy, yet being suspended freely within the cavity of the body, and unconnected with the skeleton, would leave no traces whatever upon the fossil bones.

It is impossible to have seen the large apparatus of teeth, and strength of jaws, which we have been examining in the Ichthyosauri, without concluding that animals furnished with such powerful instruments of destruction, must have used them freely in restraining the excessive population of the ancient seas. This inference has been fully confirmed by the recent discovery within their skeletons, of the half digested remains of fishes and reptiles, which they had devoured, (see Pl. 13, 14,) and by the further