

This hypothesis of Cuvier is but conjectural, respecting the power of the Plesiosaurus to change the colour of its skin; and to the unexperienced in comparative anatomy, it may seem equally conjectural, to deduce any other conclusions respecting such perishable organs as the lungs, from the discovery of peculiar contrivances, and unusual apparatus in the ribs; yet we argue on similar grounds, when from the form and capabilities of these fossil ribs, we infer that they were connected, as in the cameleon, with vast and unusual powers of expansion and contraction in the lungs; and when, on finding the ribs and wood-work of a worn-out bellows, near the ruins of a blacksmith's forge, we conclude that these more enduring parts of the

possessing the power of altering the colour of its skin; it must however be admitted that such a power would have been of much advantage to this animal, in defending it by concealment from its most formidable enemy the Ichthyosaurus, with which, its diminutive head and long slender neck, must have rendered it a very unequal combatant, and from whose attacks its slow locomotive powers must have made escape by flight impossible; the enlarged condition of the lungs, would also have been of great advantage in diminishing the frequency of its ascents to the surface, to inspire air; an operation that must have been attended with constant danger, in a sea thickly swarming with Ichthyosauri. Dr. Stark has recently observed that certain fishes, especially minnows, have a tendency to assume the colour of the vessel in which they are kept. (Proceedings Zool. Soc. Lond. July, 1833.) As in animals of this class there are no lungs, this change of colour must arise from other cause than that to which it has been attributed in the Cameleon.