

## SECTION VIII.

## PTERODACTYLE.\*

AMONG the most remarkable disclosures made by the researches of Geology, we may rank the flying reptiles, which have been ranged by Cuvier under the genus Pterodactyle; a genus presenting more singular combinations of form, than we find in any other creatures yet discovered amid the ruins of the ancient earth.†

The structure of these animals is so exceedingly anomalous, that the first discovered Pterodactyle (Pl. 21) was considered by one naturalist to be a bird, by another as a species of bat, and by a third as a flying reptile.

This extraordinary discordance of opinion respecting a creature whose skeleton was almost entire, arose from the presence of characters apparently belonging to each of the three classes to which it was referred. The form of its head, and length of neck, resembling that of birds, its wings approaching to the proportion and form of

\* See Pl. 1, Figs. 42, 43, and Plates 21, 22.

† Pterodactyles have hitherto been found chiefly in the quarries of lithographic limestone of the jura formation at Aichstadt and Solenhofen; a stone abounding in marine remains, and also containing Libellulæ, and other insects. They have also been discovered in the lias at Lyme Regis, and in the oolitic slate of Stonesfield.