

ed, with all their proportions and characters, as well as to compare them with those which now live on the surface of the globe. In effecting these objects he was assisted by naturalists and geologists in various countries, and the characters of many singular animals have been determined.

REPTILES.

None of the results of modern geology have attracted so much of public attention as the discovery of the remains of many gigantic reptiles. There has been a time in the history of our world when these animals attained an appalling magnitude, and, rioting in the wide expanse of water, swayed the sceptre of uncontroverted power over all other created beings. The descriptions of the fabled monsters of antiquity, which have so often delighted our childhood, lose all their character of exaggeration when compared with those that have been given of the reptiles whose bones are entombed in the solid strata of the globe. Some of these have evidently been fitted to live in the deep waters of the sea, while others in all probability inhabited lakes and rivers; but they all appear to have existed at a period when our earth enjoyed a much higher temperature than it now possesses. Judging from the antiquity of the rocks in which the bones of reptiles are found, they appear to have been created a long period before the viviparous animals, and at a time when the earth was unfit for creatures of a higher organization.

The first appearance of the bones of reptiles is in the beds lying immediately above the coal measures, and they are found more or less abundant as high as the chalk deposit, but above this they entirely disappear. During some part of the time that intervened between the formation of these two deposits the reptiles must have existed in immense numbers, if we may calculate from the quantity of bones that are found. They are most abundant in a limestone rock, called the *lias*, in which the bones of two extinct marine genera, the *ichthyosaurus* and *plesiosaurus*, are very numerous.

THE ICHTHYOSAURUS.

The *ichthyosaurus*, whose remains were discovered by Sir Everard Home, had a large head, enormous eyes, a short neck, and a very long tail. It was evidently destined to live in the sea, being furnished with four broad and flat paddles,