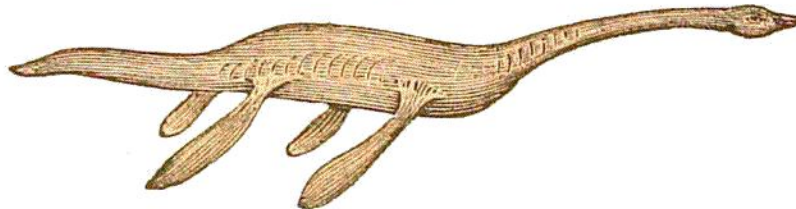


*Reptiles.*—This was the age of reptiles, remarkable both for their peculiar forms and formidable dimensions. We shall try to give some idea of a few of the most important.

*Ichthyosaurus.*—This animal, sometimes more than thirty feet long, and of which thirty species are known, had the snout of a porpoise, the teeth of a crocodile (sometimes amounting to 180), the head of a lizard, the vertebræ of a fish, the sternum of an ornithorhynchus, and the paddles of a whale: uniting in itself a combination of mechanical contrivances which are now found among three distinct classes of the animal kingdom. One of its paddles was sometimes composed of more than 100 bones; which gave it great elasticity and power, and enabled the animal to urge its way through the water with a rapid motion. Its vertebræ were more than 100. Its eye was enormously large; in one species, the orbital cavity being fourteen inches in its longest direction. This eye also, had a peculiar construction to make it operate both like a telescope and a microscope: thus enabling the animal to descry its prey in the night as well as day, and at great depths in the water. The length of the jaws was sometimes more than six feet. Its skin was naked, some of it having been found fossil; its habits were carnivorous, its food, fishes and the young of its own species; some of which it must have swallowed several feet in length. This fish-like lizard was an inhabitant of the ocean. Fig. 291 exhibits a restored ichthyosaurus.

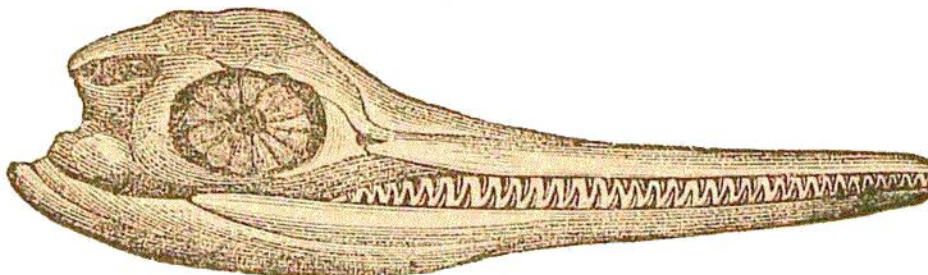
Fig. 291.



*Ichthyosaurus communis.*

The head of the ichthyosaurus, with its enormous eye, is shown on Fig. 292.

Fig. 292.



*Head of Ichthyosaurus.*