

CHAPTER X.

FOSSIL STELLERIDÆ, OR STAR-FISHES.

THE radiated animals, popularly called Star-fishes, from their stellar forms, are so generally diffused through the seas surrounding our island, that the common five-rayed species must be familiar to most of our readers, and will serve as an illustration of the general appearance and structure of this order. This species belongs to that division in which the rays are elongated, and far exceed in length the diameter of the disc ; in the other group the body is angular, and the lobes or rays are short, and not longer than the diameter of the body.

The external surface of this species is soft, and attached to a tough coriaceous integument, supported by a skeleton composed of numerous calcareous ossicula, which are arranged in series along the margins of the rays. Each ray has a longitudinal furrow, or groove, called *ambulacrum*, the sides of which are perforated by alternating rows of pores or foramina, through which are protruded or retracted