

## CHAPTER XIX.

ORNITHOLITES, OR FOSSIL BIRDS.

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EXCEPT in strata of comparatively modern origin, the remains of Birds are of extreme rarity in a fossil state. In the caverns that contain the skeletons of carnivorous animals, and which were once their dens, and are now their sepulchres, the bones of several species of existing genera of Birds have been discovered, in England, on the Continent, and in Australia; and very recently there have been obtained from alluvial deposits in New Zealand, the skeletons of Birds of enormous magnitude, and under conditions which leave some doubt whether, like the *Dodo*, the species may not have been extirpated by man during the last few centuries; or even if some stray individuals of the race may not, according to the belief of the aborigines, be still in existence in the interior of the country.

From the gypsum quarries at Montmartre, near Paris, Baron Cuvier obtained several species of Ornitholites; and these fossil birds of the eocene