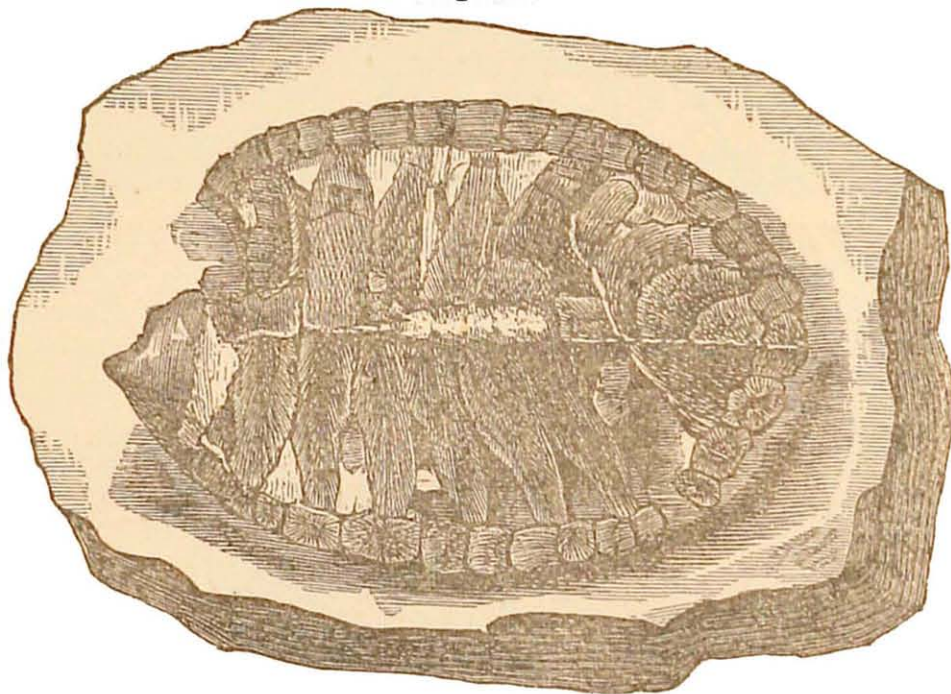


abounded in crocodiles and fresh-water tortoises of ancient type and fashion ; and its woods and plains were the haunts of a strange reptilian fauna of what has been well termed "fearfully great lizards," some of which, such as the *iguanodon*, rivalled the largest elephant in height, and greatly more than rivalled him in length and bulk. Judging from what remains, it seems not improbable that the reptiles of this Oolitic period were quite as numerous individually, and consisted of well-nigh as many genera and species, as all the mammals of the present time. In the cretaceous ages, the class, though still the dominant one, is visibly reduced in its

Fig. 65.



*CHELONIA BENSTEDI.*

(*Chalk.*)

standing : it had reached its culminating point in the Oolite, and then began to decline ; and with the first dawn of the Tertiary division we find it occupying, as now, a very subordinate place in creation. Curiously enough, it is not until its times of humiliation and decay that one of the most remarkable of its orders appears,—an order itself illustrative of extreme degradation, and which figures largely, in every