

alimentary regimen of this animal which has perished from the earth many thousands, perhaps millions, of years. Mary Anning, to whom we owe many of the discoveries made in the neighbourhood of Lyme Regis, her native place, had in her collection an enormous coprolite of the Ichthyosaurus. This coprolite (Fig. 99) contained some bones and scales of Fishes, and of divers Reptiles, well enough preserved to have their species identified. It only remains to be added that, among the bones, those of the Ichthyosaurus were often found, especially those of young individuals. The presence of the undigested remains of vertebræ and other bones of animals of its own species in the coprolites of the Ichthyosaurus proves, as we have already had occasion to remark, that this great Saurian must have been a most voracious monster, since it habitually devoured not only fish, but individuals of its own race—the smaller becoming the prey of the larger. The structure of the jaw of the Ichthyosaurus leads us to believe that the animal swallowed its prey without dividing it. Its stomach and intestines must, then, have formed a sort of pouch of great volume, filling entirely the abdominal cavity, and corresponding in extent to the great development of the teeth and jaws.

The perfection with which its contents have been preserved in the fossilised coprolites, furnishes indirect proofs that the intestinal canal of the Ichthyosaurus resembled closely that of the shark and the dog-fish—fishes essentially voracious and destructive, which have the intestinal canal spirally convoluted, an arrangement which is exactly that indicated in some of the coprolites

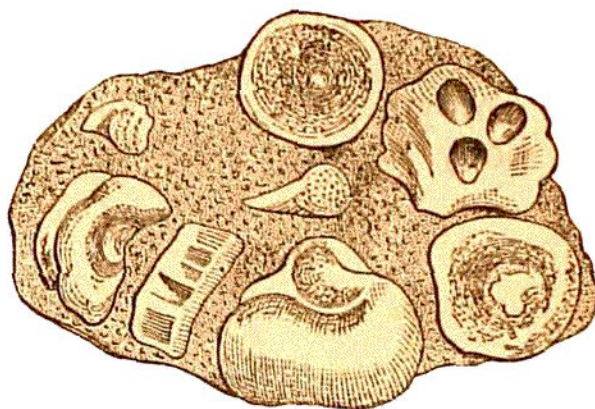


Fig. 99.—Coprolite, enclosing bones of small Ichthyosaurus.

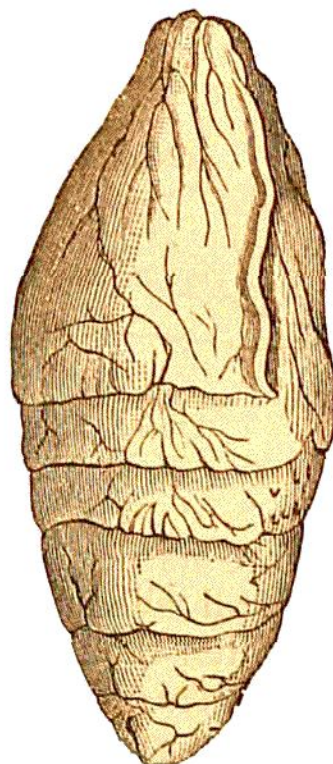


Fig. 100.—Coprolite of Ichthyosaurus.