



Fig. 177.—Andrias Scheuchzeri.

177). It is obviously impossible to see in this skeleton what the enthusiastic savant wished to perceive. And we can form an idea from this instance, of the errors to which a preconceived idea, blindly followed, may sometimes lead. How a naturalist of such eminence as Scheuchzer could have perceived in this enormous head, and in these upper members, the least resemblance to the osseous parts of a man is incomprehensible!

The Pre-Adamite "witness of the deluge" made a great noise in Germany, and no one there dared to dispute the opinion of the Swiss naturalist, under his double authority of theologian and savant. This, probably, is the reason why Gesner in his "*Traité des Pétrifications*," published in 1758, describes with admiration the fossil of Oeningen, which he attributes, with Scheuchzer, to the *antediluvian man*.

Pierre Camper alone dared to oppose this opinion, which was then universally professed throughout Germany. He went to Oeningen in 1787 to examine the celebrated fossil animal; he had no difficulty in detecting the error into which Scheuchzer had fallen. He recognised at once that it was a Reptile; but he deceived himself, nevertheless, as to the family to which it belonged; he took it for a Saurian. "A petrified lizard," Camper wrote; "could it possibly