



Fig. 94. -*Ichthyosaurus communis*.

*Balistes* or *Silurus*; but Agassiz has shown them to be neither the one nor the other, but bony spines on the fin, like those of the living genera of *Cestracions* and *Chimæras*, in both of which the concave face is armed with small spines like those of the *Hybodus*. The spines were simply imbedded in the flesh, and attached to it by strong muscles. "They served," says Dr. Buckland, "as in the *Chimæra*, to raise and depress the fin, their action resembling that of a movable mast lowering backward."

Let us hasten to say, however, that these are not the beings that characterised the age, and were the salient features of the generation of animals which existed during the Jurassic period. These distinguishing features are found in the enormous reptiles with lizard's head, crocodile's conical teeth, the trunk and tail of a quadruped, whale-like paddles, and the double-concave vertebræ of fishes; and this strange form, on such a gigantic scale that even their inanimate remains are examined with a curiosity not unmixed with awe. The country round Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, has long been celebrated for the curious fossils discovered in its quarries, and preserved in the muddy accumulations of the sea of the Liassic period. The country is hilly—"up one hill and down another," is a pretty correct provincial description of the walk from Bridport to Lyme Regis—where some of the most frightful creatures the living world has probably ever