



Fig. 96.—*Ichthyosaurus platydon*.

primitive seas. It was, in fact, an animal exclusively marine; which, on shore, would rest motionless like an inert mass. Its whale-like paddles, and fish-like vertebræ, the length of the tail and other parts of its structure, prove that its habits were aquatic; as the remains of fishes and reptiles, and the form of its teeth, show that it was carnivorous. Like the Whale, also, the *Ichthyosaurus* breathed atmospheric air; so that it was under the necessity of coming frequently to the surface of the water, like that inhabitant of the deep. We can even believe, with Bayle, that it was provided, like the Whale, with vents or blowers, through which it ejected, in columns into the air, the water it had swallowed.

The dimensions of the *Ichthyosaurus* varied with the species, of which five are known and described. These are *Ichthyosaurus communis*, *I. platydon*, *I. intermedius*, *I. tenuirostris*, and *I. Cuvierii*, the largest being more than thirty feet in length.

The short, thick neck of the *Ichthyosaurus* supported a capacious head, and was continued backwards, from behind the eyes, in a column composed of more than a hundred vertebræ. The animal being adapted, like the whale, for rapid movement through the water, its vertebræ had none of the invariable solidity of those of the Lizard or Cro-