

DESCRIPTION OF THE MUTILATED CRANIUM OF A
LARGE FISH, FROM THE LOWER CRETACEOUS OF
QUEENSLAND.

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(Plates i.—ii.)

A comparatively recent visit to Queensland yielded to Mr. P. G. Black's researches in the Lower Cretaceous beds at Marathon, Flinders River, the mutilated skull of a fish. A reproduction of this fossil has been made for the Museum collection, with Mr. Black's permission, the original returning to his cabinet.

The skull is crushed from above downward, and consequently expanded to some extent laterally, and also pressed backwards. Above, the bones are firmly encased in the close-grained argillaceous limestone forming the matrix, but below are weathered to a great extent free of the latter. The displacement arising from this downward and backward pressure renders the determination of the osseous members of the cranium difficult and uncertain; but the jaws are in a much better state of preservation. A preliminary inspection shows considerable portions of the maxillaries, and mandibles *in situ*, parts of the opercular apparatus, the hyoid bones, the pectoral fins, some of the anterior vertebræ, and remains of some ribs.

Photographs of this head were forwarded to Dr. A. Smith Woodward, who has been good enough to afford me some valuable suggestions as to its affinity. In correspondence, I indicated the genus *Portheus*, Cope, a species of which is believed to exist in the Lower Cretaceous of Queensland, but Dr. Woodward suggested *Elopopsis*, Heckel, as a more fitting resting-place. As, however, the teeth are implanted in sockets, and not merely attached to the margins of the jaws,¹ I have rejected this reference in favour of one that appears to me to suit the case better. In the Ichthyodectidæ (Crook), the margins of the jaws bear a row of strong, conical teeth implanted in sockets,² and the maxillæ

¹ At least, so I infer from Dr. A. Smith Woodward's remarks (Brit. Mus. Cat. Foss. Fishes, pt. 4, 1901. p. 8); see also J. J. Heckel—Denks. K. K. Akad. Wiss. (Math. Nat. Classe), xi., 1 Abth., 1856, p. 251.

² Zittel—Text-Book Pal. (Ed. Eastman), ii, 1902, p. 95.