

The *Bathybial Sea-devils* which are noticed under the following genera, are degraded forms of *Lophius*; they descend to the greatest depths of the ocean. Their bones are of an extremely light and thin texture, and frequently other parts of their organisation, their integuments, muscles, and intestines are equally loose in texture when the specimens are brought to the surface. In their habits they probably do not differ in any degree from their surface representative, *Lophius*.

When the first individuals of this group were discovered, they seemed to be sufficiently distinct from one another to justify generic separation. However, the additions of recent years exhibit that variation in the shape of the body, head and mouth, in the specialised dorsal spines, and in the development of dermal scutes, which may be expected in such grotesquely formed creatures; and future discoveries may lead to a further reduction of genera, viz., to the union of the naked-skinned *Melanocetus* and *Oneirodes* with *Ceratias*.

The number of the dorsal spines is always reduced, and at the end of the series of these fishes only one spine remains, with a simple, very small lamella at the extremity (*Melanocetus johnsonii*, *Melanocetus murrayi*). In other forms sometimes a second cephalic spine, sometimes a spine on the back of the trunk, is preserved. The first cephalic spine always retains the original function of a lure for other marine creatures, but to render it more effective, a special luminous organ¹ is sometimes developed in connection with the filaments with which its extremity is provided (*Ceratias bispinosus*, *Oneirodes eschrichtii*). So far as is known at present, these complicated tentacles attain to the highest degree of development in *Himantolophus* and *Aegæonichthys*. In other species very peculiar dermal appendages are developed, either accompanying the spine on the back; or replacing it; they may be paired or form a group of three, are pear-shaped, covered with the common skin, and perforated at the top, a delicate tentacle sometimes issuing from the foramen.

Himantolophus, Rhdt.

Body, short, thick, moderately compressed; head very large. Eyes rudimentary. Mouth directed obliquely upwards, of moderate width, with projecting mandible. Jaws armed with several series of rasp-like depressible teeth of different lengths; palate toothless. Skin thick, with round scutes scattered over the body. The spinous dorsal reduced to a single filament; the soft dorsal and anal very short. Ventrals none. Gills two and two halves.

¹ Whose function was first suggested by Lütken.