

*Saurians or Lizards.*

Within a few years, the skeletons or disjointed bones of some very large oviparous animals of the Saurian family, namely, ancient crocodiles, the ichthyosaurus or fish lizard, the megalosaurus or great lizard, and the plesiosaurus, have been found in the recent secondary rocks, especially of England and France, and some of them in the tertiary.

The Megalosaurus is found in limestones and sandstones lying higher than the lias, and the ichthyosaurus and plesiosaurus are found also in many of the strata above, and in some of those below that rock.

The fossil crocodile appears to have been, anciently, an inhabitant of fresh water, and of rivers, as at present. In the West Indies, according to De La Beche, the crocodiles frequent muddy, and sometimes brackish ponds; and in shallows, they often remain for hours, with the tips of their noses out of water. The organization and habits of crocodiles, do not enable them to contend with the agitations of the sea, which they shun. It would seem, however, that the organization of the ichthyosaurus would enable him to swim in the waves.

The crocodile has been continued, perhaps, from the new red sandstone—certainly from the lias, to the present time—and, as its remains often occur in the interval, it appears to have been a tolerably constant inhabitant of our globe.

With one exception, that of the opossum, found in the Stonesfield slate, near Oxford, (Eng.) no viviparous vertebrated animal has been found below the chalk.\* The Stonesfield slate belongs to the oolitic series, and lies below the chalk.

The remains of the Saurians, found, within a few years, in England France, and other countries, indicate animals of twenty, forty, fifty, and seventy feet or more in length. They were generally amphibious, and there is every reason to believe, that when only portions of England stood out, as islands, above the water, these enormous animals swam and sported about, in the inter-insular waters of primitive Britain, or basked upon the shores of its seas and estuaries.

Mr. Mantell, of Lewes, in Sussex, England, has described another enormous Saurian animal, the Iguanodon, (so called from his resemblance to the Iguana of the West Indies;) it was an herbivorous reptile, and appears to have attained the length of seventy feet or more with a height of nine or ten feet. Still, his remains are interred in

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\* Unless it be the East Windsor animal.—Vide Am. Jour. Vol. II.