

restrial families of reptiles, and especially ophidia, are scarcely known in a fossil state: the fresh water batrachida and chelonida occur only in particular deposits, which seem to be wholly or partially of fresh water origin (as the wealden formation, the fresh water formations of the Isle of Wight, the brown coal deposits of the Rhine). Marine chelonida are not unfrequent in the secondary and tertiary strata. The saurian order presents us with some singular facts.

The existing crocodiles offer in the saurian group a particular and distinct type, which seems to unite, in some degree, the characters of the chelonida and true lizards: their life is spent, principally, in the waters of rivers which communicate with the sea (Nile, Ganges, Senegal, Mississippi); and they sometimes pass from the shore to prey in the salt waters. Three great divisions of crocodiles correspond to three distinct physical regions:—the alligators are wholly American; the true crocodiles belong entirely to Africa and the West Indian islands; the gavials are found only in India. All the fossil races of crocodiles which occur in the saliferous and oolitic systems are very similar to the long-snouted Indian gavials; those above the chalk approach the broader beaked Nilotic crocodiles.\*

There is but little difference of magnitude between the fossil and the living races of crocodiles, for the great gavial of the Ganges measures twenty-five feet long; and we are not aware that any fossil crocodile has been found of larger dimensions.

Analogous to crocodiles, true lizards, and turtles, occur a great variety of fossil saurians, some of which were terrestrial, and more aquatic; many of them quite monstrous in dimensions, and extraordinary in organisation. The following table is taken from Von Meyer's *Palæologica*.

\* Cuvier, *Ossemens Fossiles*. The investigation here referred to is extremely important and interesting.