

of dormancy, whether produced by cold, drought, or excessive moisture. Their peculiar structure enables them to endure long abstinence, to an extent impossible to other races of animals. Their seasonal habits, or, in other words, alternate periods of activity and repose, are in accordance with the sudden evolution of the seasons in warm climates; they are dormant when nature does not need their agency, and rouse into activity when required to repress the redundancy of those vegetables or animals which constitute their food; exhibiting an admirable adaptation to the peculiar condition of existence which they are destined to fulfil. Some are herbivorous, others carnivorous, and many prey on insects; their powers of progression are as various—some orders, though destitute of fins, wings, or feet, bound along the ground with great agility; others walk or swim; while some species are capable of flight. Von Meyer, an eminent German naturalist, has therefore arranged the fossil reptiles into groups, characterised by the organs of motion;\* as *flyers*, *swimmers*, or *walkers*. From this general view of the economy and habits of the recent reptiles, we shall be able to comprehend the physical conditions required by those extinct forms which occur in a fossil state, and thus arrive at some interesting

\* Palæologica zur Geschichte der Erde und ihrer Geschöpfe Von Meyer. See a translation of a portion of this work, "On the Structure of the Fossil Saurians," by G. F. Richardson, Esq. (Mag. of Nat. Hist. vol. i. p. 281,) of the British Museum.