

birds or quadrupeds which they hunted, they would be not unlikely to give very accurate copies of markings with which they were so familiar. The important observations made by Dr. King relatively to the fossil imprints, called the attention of the whole country to the Indian antiquities of comparatively modern date, but the popular notion that there was a connection between them is wholly erroneous.

Since the announcement, by Dr. King, in 1844, of the proofs of the existence of reptiles at the period when the coal strata of Pennsylvania were formed, Professor Goldfuss, of Bonn, has published the description of more than one saurian found in the ancient coal-measures of Saarbruck, near Treves.

Never, certainly, in the history of science, were discoveries made more calculated to put us on our guard for the future against hasty generalizations founded on mere negative evidence. Geologists have been in the habit of taking for granted, that at epochs anterior to the coal there were no birds or air-breathing quadrupeds in existence; and it seems still scarcely possible to dispel the hypothesis that the first creation of a particular class of beings coincides in date with our first knowledge of it in a fossil state, or the kindred dogma that the first appearance of life on the globe agrees, chronologically, with the present limits of our insight into the first creation of living beings, as deduced from organic remains. These limits have shifted, even in our own times, more than once, or have been greatly expanded, without dissipating the delusion, so intense is the curiosity of man to trace back the present system of things to a beginning. Rather than be disappointed, or entertain a doubt of his power to discern the shores of the vast ocean of past time, into which his glances are penetrating, like the telescope into the region of the remoter nebulæ, he can not refrain from pleasing his imagination with the idea that some fog-banks, resting on the bosom of the deep, are, in reality, the firm land for which his aching vision is on the stretch.

I can not conclude these remarks on the geological discoveries made in these remote valleys of the Alleghanies, without alluding to a moral phenomenon, which was forcibly brought before my