

are therefore external; and resemble those of the crocodile; yet the ribs are so weak as to be incapable of sustaining the powerful action of the muscles of the anterior extremities, or paddles; accordingly, the bones, which by a kind of license we continue to call clavicle, omoplate or scapula, and coracoid, though strangely deviating from the original form and connections, constitute a texture of considerable strength, which perfects the anterior part of the trunk, and gives attachment and lodgement to the powerful muscles of the paddle.

But in giving their attention to this subject, it does not appear that naturalists have hit upon the right explanation of the peculiar structure, and curious varieties of these bones, in the class of reptiles. Why is the apparatus of respiration so totally changed in these animals? They are cold blooded animals; they require to respire less frequently than other creatures, and they remain long under the water. I conceive that the peculiarity in their mode of respiration corresponds with this property. Hence their vesicular lungs, their mode of swallowing the air, instead of inhaling it; and hence, especially, their power of compressing the body and expelling the air. It is this provision for emptying the lungs, I imagine, which enables them to go under the water and crawl upon the bottom; without it, that is to say, had they possessed the