

first appeared, seems to have been the last of the long series, during which the oolitic and cretaceous groupes were in process of formation. In these periods the inhabitants of our planet seem to have been principally marine, and some of the largest creatures were Saurians of gigantic stature, many of them living in the sea, and controlling the excessive increase of the then existing tribes of fishes.

From the lias upwards, to the commencement of the chalk formation, the Ichthyosauri and Plesiosauri were the tyrants of the ocean; and just at the point of time when their existence terminated, during the deposition of the chalk, the new genus *Mosasaurus* appears to have been introduced, to supply for a while their place and office,* being itself destined in its turn to give place to the Cetacea of the tertiary periods. As no Saurians of the present world are inhabitants of the sea, and the most powerful living representatives of this order, viz. the Crocodiles, though living chiefly in water, have recourse to stratagem rather than speed, for the capture of their prey, it may not be unprofitable to examine the mechanical contrivances, by which a reptile, most nearly allied to the Monitor, was so constructed, as to possess the power of moving in the sea; with sufficient velocity to

* Remains of the *Mosasaurus* have been discovered by Mr. Mantell in the upper chalk near Lewes, and by Dr. Morton in the green sand of Virginia.