

fishes, we might, *à priori*, expect that if any Crocodilean forms had then existed they would most nearly have resembled the modern Gavial. And we have hitherto found only those genera which have elongated beaks, in formations anterior to, and including the chalk; whilst true Crocodiles, with a short and broad snout, like that of the Cayman and the Alligator, appear for the first time in strata of the tertiary periods, in which the remains of mammalia abound.\*

During these grand periods of lacustrine mammalia, in which but few of the present genera of terrestrial carnivora had been called into existence, the important office of controlling the excessive increase of the aquatic herbivora appears to have been consigned to the Crocodiles, whose habits fitted them, in a peculiar degree, for such a service. Thus, the past history of the Crocodilean tribe presents another example of the well regulated workings of a

\* One of these, found by Mr. Spencer in the London clay of the Isle of Sheppy, is engraved, Pl. 25', Fig. 1. Crocodiles of this kind have been found in the chalk of Meudon, in the plastic clay of Auteuil, in the London clay, in the gypsum of Mont Martre, and in the lignites of Provence.

The modern broad-nosed Crocodileans, though they have the power to capture mammalia, are not limited to this kind of prey; they feed largely also on fishes, and occasionally on birds. This omnivorous character of the existing Crocodilean family, seems adapted to the present general diffusion of more varied kinds of food, than existed when the only form of the beak in this family was fitted, like that of the Gavial, to feed chiefly on fishes.