

would in no way interfere with the preservation of impressions made by feet, and speedily filled up by a succeeding deposit of sand, which would assume, with the fidelity of an artificial plaster mould, the precise form of the surface to which it was applied.

Notwithstanding this absence of bones from the rocks which are thus abundantly impressed with footsteps, the latter alone suffice to assure us both of the existence and character of the animals by which they were made. Their form is much too short for the feet of Crocodiles, or any other known Saurians; and it is to the Testudinata, or Tortoises, that we look, with most probability of finding the species to which their origin is due.\*

The Historian or the Antiquary may have traversed the fields of ancient or of modern

\* This evidence of footsteps, on which we are here arguing, is one which all mankind appeal to in every condition of society. The thief is identified by the impression which his shoe has left near the scene of his depredations. Captain Parry found the tracks of human feet upon the banks of the stream in Possession Bay, which appeared so fresh, that he at first imagined them to have been recently made by some natives: on examination they were distinctly ascertained to be the marks of the shoes of some of his own crew, eleven months before. The frozen condition of the soil had prevented their obliteration. The American savage not only identifies the Elk and Bison by the impression of their hoofs, but ascertains also the time that has elapsed since each animal had passed. From the Camel's track upon the sand, the Arab can determine whether it was heavily or lightly laden, or whether it was lame.