

“*Age of Reptiles*” is now no longer considered fabulous.

In the most ancient fossiliferous deposits, indications of the existence of Reptiles are visible, in the indelible markings left by their footsteps on the muddy banks of rivers, and on the wet sands of the sea-shores, now in the state of layers of marl and sandstone. Here and there, in the Carboniferous and New Red systems, teeth and bones are found presenting unequivocal proofs of the early presence of extinct forms of cold-blooded oviparous quadrupeds. As we ascend in the secondary formations, we are suddenly surrounded by innumerable marine and terrestrial reptiles, belonging to species and genera of which no living representatives are known. Throughout the Liassic, Oolitic, Wealden, and Cretaceous epochs, the class of Reptiles was at its fullest development. In the Tertiary periods which succeeded, the Reptiles approached the recent types, and their relics are found intermingled with the bones of mammiferous quadrupeds ; thus indicating the commencement of the present condition and relations of the animal kingdom. Referring the reader to *Bd.* p. 165, and *Wond.* pp. 480—504, for a more comprehensive view of this subject, we advance to the examination of some of the fossil genera and species ; and propose, in the first place, to explain a few essential characters of form and structure, observable in those durable parts of the skeletons of reptiles, which are most frequently met with