

says Mr. Darwin, "is extremely common on all the islands throughout the archipelago. It lives exclusively on the rocky sea-beaches, and I never saw one even ten yards inshore. The usual length is about a yard, but there are some even 4 feet long. It is of a dirty black color, sluggish in its movements on the land; but, when in the water, it swims with perfect ease and quickness by a serpentine movement of its body and flattened tail, the legs during this time being motionless, and closely collapsed on its sides. Their limbs and strong claws are admirably adapted for crawling over the rugged and fissured masses of lava which everywhere form the coast. In such situations, a group of six or seven of these hideous reptiles may oftentimes be seen on the black rocks, a few feet above the surf, basking in the sun with outstretched legs. Their stomachs, on being opened, were found to be largely distended with minced sea-weed, of a kind which grows at the bottom of the sea at some little distance from the coast. To obtain this, the lizards go out to sea in shoals. One of these animals was sunk in salt-water, from the ship, with a heavy weight attached to it, and on being drawn up again after an hour it was quite active and unharmed. It is not yet known by the inhabitants where this animal lays its eggs; a singular fact, considering its abundance, and that the natives are well acquainted with the eggs of the terrestrial *Amblyrhynchus*, which is also herbivorous."*

In those deposits now forming by the sediment washed away from the wasting shores of the Galapagos Islands the remains of saurians, both of the land and sea, as well as of chelonians and fish, may be mingled with marine shells, without any bones of land quadrupeds or batrachian reptiles; yet even here we should expect the remains of marine mammalia to be imbedded in the new strata, for there are seals, besides several kinds of cetacea, on the Galapagian shores; and, in this respect, the parallel between the modern fauna, above described, and the ancient one of the lias, would not hold good.

Sudden destruction of saurians.—It has been remarked, and truly, that many of the fish and saurians, found fossil in the lias, must have met with sudden death and immediate burial; and that the destructive operation, whatever may have been its nature, was often repeated.

"Sometimes," says Dr. Buckland, "scarcely a single bone or scale has been removed from the place it occupied during life; which could not have happened had the uncovered bodies of these saurians been left, even for a few hours, exposed to putrefaction, and to the attacks of fishes, and other smaller animals at the bottom of the sea."† Not only are the skeletons of the Ichthyosaurs entire, but sometimes the contents of their stomachs still remain between their ribs, as before remarked, so that we can discover the particular species of fish on which they lived, and the form of their excrements. Not unfrequently there are layers of these coprolites, at different depths in the lias, at a distance from any

* Darwin's Journal, chap. xix.

† Bridgew. Treat. p. 125.