

fingers and thumb, which those of the human hand never possess. Onward the creature went, slowly and deliberately, on some unknown errand, prompted by its instincts; and as the margin of the sea or lake, lately deserted by the water, possessed the necessary plasticity, it retained every impression sharply. The wind was blowing strongly at the time, and the heavens were dark with a gathering shower. On came the rain; the drops were heavy and large; and, beaten aslant by the wind, they penetrated the sand, not perpendicularly, as they would have done had they fallen during a calm, but at a considerable angle. But such was the weight of the reptile, that, though the rain-drops sank deeply into the sand on every side, they made but comparatively faint impressions in its footprints, where the compressive effect of its tread rendered the resisting mass more firm. 'We have here, in a single slab,' says Dr. Buckland, in referring, in his address to the Geological Society for 1840, to these very footprints, and their adjuncts,—'we have here, in a single slab, a combination of proofs as to meteoric, hydrostatic, and locomotive phenomena, which occurred at a time incalculably remote, in the atmosphere, the water, and the movements of animals, from which we infer, with the certainty of cumulative circumstantial evidence, the direction of the wind, the depth and course of the water, and the quarter towards which the animals were passing. The latter is indicated by the direction of the footsteps which form the track; the size and the curvature of the ripple-marks on the sand, now converted into sandstone, show the depth and direction of the current; while the oblique impressions of the rain-drop register the point from which the wind was blowing at or about the time when the animals were passing.'¹ There is another scarce less curi-

¹ The *Labyrinthodon Bucklandi* (Lloyd), formerly believed to be a Triassic reptile, is now ranked as belonging to the *Permian* fauna. See Ramsay, *Quart. Jour. Geol. Soc.* vol. ii. p. 198.—W. S. S.