

the arrival of a far-off race. The air was fit for the respiration of a low order of terrestrial animals, and, in obedience to the mandates of creative energy, they began to come forth. There was an interval of time in the history of the world when the scales of empire hung balanced between the fishes and the reptiles. The first were on the wane; the latter were gathering strength from age to age. Nature favored the latter. Omnipotence bade them march on, and vanquish and sweep from the earth those lower forms which had been permitted to hold the mastery in creation only because the world was, as yet, unfit for beings more exalted and worthy. These middle ages are styled the Permian period. Vegetation was still abundant. Though the acme of vegetable luxuriance had passed, and no more vast deposits of coal were to be treasured up—at least in those portions of the world preparing for the occupancy of the Caucasian race—the trunks and leaves of the flora of that period, preserved in beds of sandstone and shale, attest the productiveness of the Permian soil. In these ages of the world the first emphatically lizard-like reptiles came upon the stage—a family belonging to the Saurians—though many of the Permian reptiles present a divergence from true lizards in having their numerous teeth implanted in sockets instead of soldered to the margins of the jaws. Occasionally, also, was to be seen the frog-like form of a Labyrinthodont sunning himself upon the marshy border of a Permian estuary (Fig. 69).

Until within a few years geologists were unacquainted with any Permian rocks upon the American continent. Dr. Emmons, however, in 1856, established the existence of Permian reptiles in a brown sandstone in North Carolina, deposited in some of the furrows between the folds of the Appalachian upheaval. A little later, Permian rocks were announced from Kansas almost simultaneously by