

in the Welsh coal fields. On his return to England he read a paper on these subjects before the Geological Society of London, in which he noticed the subject of reptilian footprints at Horton Bluff. The specimen was exhibited at the meeting of the Society, and was, I believe, admitted, on the high authority of Prof. Owen, to be probably reptilian. Unfortunately Sir William's paper appeared only in abstract in the Transactions; and in this abstract, though the footprints are mentioned, no opinion is expressed as to their nature. Sir William's own opinion is thus stated in a letter to me, dated June, 1843, when he was on his way to Canada, to commence the survey which has since developed so astonishing a mass of geological facts.

“ Among the specimens which I carried from Horton Bluff, one is of very high interest. It exhibits the footprints of some reptilian animal. Owen has no doubt of the marks being genuine footprints. The rocks of Horton Bluff are below the gypsum of that neighbourhood; so that the specimen in question (if Lyell's views are correct<sup>1</sup>) comes from the very bottom of the coal series, or at any rate very low down in it, and demonstrates the existence of reptiles at an earlier epoch than has hitherto been determined; none having been previously found below the magnesian limestone, or, to give it Murchison's new name, the 'Permian era.' ”

This extract is of interest, not merely as an item of evidence in relation to the matter now in hand, but as a mark in the progress of geological investigation. For the reasons above stated, the important discovery thus made in 1841, and published in 1842, was overlooked; and the discovery of reptilian bones by Von Dechen, at Saarbruck, in 1844, and that of footprints by Dr. King in the same year, in Pennsylvania,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Lyell had then just read a paper announcing his discovery that the gypsiferous system of Nova Scotia is Lower Carboniferous, in which he mentions the footprints referred to, as being reptilian.