

was, in short, as we often find to be the case with the earliest forms of life, the possessor of powers and structures not usually, in the modern world, combined in a single species. It was certainly not a fish, yet its bony scales and the form of its vertebræ, and of its teeth, might, in the absence of other evidence, cause it to be mistaken for one. We call it a Batrachian, yet its dentition, the sculpturing of the bones of its skull, which were certainly no more external plates than the similar bones of a crocodile, its ribs, and the structure of its limbs, remind us of the higher reptiles ; and we do not know that it ever possessed gills, or passed through a larval or fish-like condition. Still, in a great many important characters, its structures are undoubtedly batrachian. It stands, in short, in the same position with the *Lepidodendra* and *Sigillariæ* under whose shade it crept, which, though placed by palæobotanists in alliance with certain modern groups of plants, manifestly differed from these in many of their characters, and occupied a different position in nature. In the coal period the distinctions of physical and vital conditions were not well defined. Dry land and water, terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals, and lower and higher forms of animal and vegetable life, are consequently not easily separated from each other. This is no doubt a state of things characteristic of the earlier stages of the earth's history, yet not necessarily so ; for there are some reasons, derived from fossil plants, for believing that in the preceding Devonian period there was less of this, and consequently that there may then have been a higher and more varied animal life than in the coal period.¹

The dentition of *Dendrerpeton* shows it to have been carnivorous in a high degree. It may have captured fishes and smaller reptiles, either on land or in water, and very probably fed on dead carcasses as well. If, as seems likely, any of the

¹ See the author's paper on Devonian plants, *Journal of the Geological Society*, vol. xviii. p. 328.