

land. Their exact geological age is unknown, but there is no improbability in supposing that they may have existed with more or less of extension since the Secondary or Mesozoic period. In any case their fauna is in some respects a survival of that age. Lyell has truly remarked, "In the fauna of the Galapagos Islands we have a state of things very analogous to that of the Secondary period."

Like other oceanic islands, the Galapagos have no indigenous mammals, with the doubtful exception of a South American mouse; but, unlike most others, they are rich in reptiles. At the head of these stand several species of gigantic tortoises. This group of animals, so far as known, commenced its existence in the Eocene Tertiary; and in this and the Miocene period still more gigantic species existed on the continents. It has been supposed that at some such early date they reached the Galapagos from South America. Another group of Galapagan reptiles, perhaps still more remarkable, is that of iguana-like lizards of the genus *Amblyrhynchus*, which are vegetable feeders,—one of them browsing on marine weeds. They recall the great iguana-like reptiles of the European Wealden, and stand remote from all modern types. There are also snakes of two species, but these are South American forms, and may have drifted to the islands in comparatively recent times on floating trees. The birds are a curious assemblage. A few are common American species, like the rice bird. Others are quaint and peculiar creatures, allied to South American birds, but probably representing forms long since extinct on the continent. The bird fauna, as Wallace remarks, indicates that some of these animals are old residents, others more recent arrivals; and it is probable that they have arrived at various times since the early Tertiary. He assumes that the earlier arrivals have been modified in the islands "into a variety of distinct types"; but the only evidence of this is that some of the species are closely related to each other. It is more likely