

Reptiles.—As early as the year 1812, Cuvier had given a full exposition of all reptiles known up to that date, and had elucidated in a masterly manner the osteology of the Ichthyosaurians, Plesiosaurians, Crocodiles, Mosasaurians, Lizards, Tortoises, and Pterodactyles. And as the systematic arrangement of living reptiles had already reached a standard of security, the fossil discoveries could the more easily be grouped according to their apparent affinities. In the year 1830, Von Meyer made the first attempt at a systematic classification of living and fossil reptiles. Meyer consigned all fossil reptiles, with the exception of tortoises and serpents, to the Saurians, and sub-divided the Saurians into Dactylopoda, Nexipoda, Pachypoda, Pterodactyli, and Labyrinthodonti.

This classification was soon changed by Owen.¹ This great anatomist opened his magnificent series of researches on fossil reptiles in the year 1839; his works on this subject extend over a period of fifty years, and have been a source of remarkable scientific progress. Owen erected a number of orders of fossil reptiles, and gave to them an equal value with the orders of living reptiles. His systematic sub-division, with a few changes afterwards introduced by Huxley, Cope, Marsh, and Baur, has retained its authoritative position to the present day. All fossil reptiles occurring in Great Britain were described by Owen in a long and profusely illustrated series of monographs published in the volumes of the Palæontographical Society; he also examined and described the remarkable reptilian remains from the Karroo formation in South Africa.

Meyer supplied an exhaustive account of all reptiles occurring in Germany. This indefatigable palæontologist published four large monographs of the fossil Saurians between 1847 and 1860, and in addition contributed many other memoirs, illustrated by his own drawings, to the volumes of

¹ Sir Richard Owen, born on the 20th July 1804, in Lancaster, studied medicine, and especially surgery, in Edinburgh and London; became in 1828 assistant at the College of Surgeons in London, and in 1834 Professor of Comparative Anatomy. The Geological Society in 1838 presented the Wollaston medal to the young scientist, and in 1857 he was chosen President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In the year 1856 he resigned his Professorship at the College of Surgeons, and accepted the post of a Director of the British Museum. In 1881 the Natural History Collections were transferred to the new buildings at South Kensington, and Sir Richard Owen was director of that department. He died on the 18th December 1892.