

formed on the plan, if we may thus express it, of quadrupeds, the extremities of many of them were more paddles than feet:* and we conclude that they were capable of dragging their huge bulk on the land, because the structure of their skeletons proves that they were oviparous and breathed the atmosphere. Some of them had a conformation in their extremities, resembling that of our present oviparous quadrupeds, to enable them to walk or crawl on slimy ground; and judging by the habits of these, as the crocodile, gavial, alligator, and cayman, certain species of which were among them, they lived in still water, with muddy bottom, retreating under the mud, and projecting their snouts between the aquatic plants, to breathe: and they must have been prolific to an extraordinary degree, as they had not their enemies, the vulture and the ichneumon, which destroy multitudes of the eggs of these creatures of the present day. Others seem to have had their skins extended on their anterior extremities,† if not to provide a power of flight, at least to allow them to drop in safety from the elevations which they might have crept to.

The Hylæosaurus, the last discovered of these huge animals in the same beds, and supposed by Mr. Mantell to have been a reptile intermediate between the crocodiles and the lizards, is estimated to have been about thirty feet in length.

* See page 114, and also the Appendix.

† The Pterodactyles, see page 83.