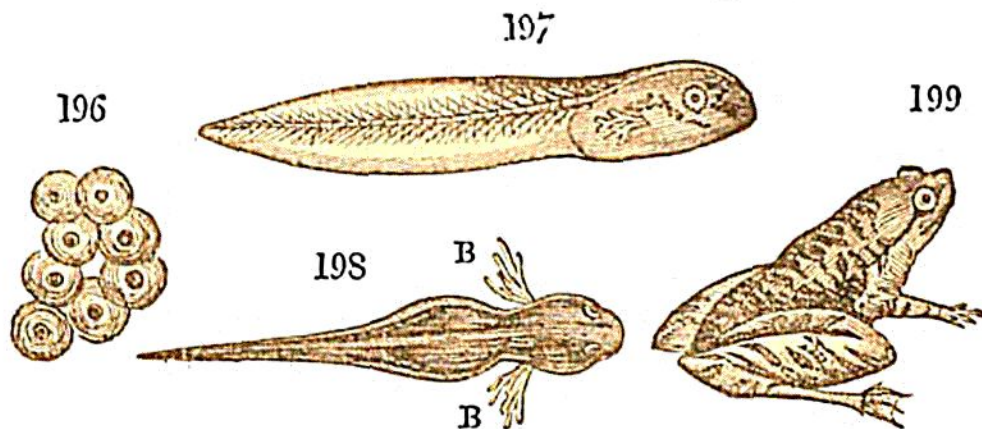


§ 2. *Batrachia.*

THE order of *Batrachia*, or Amphibious Reptiles, constitutes the first step in the transition from aquatic to terrestrial vertebrata. It is more particularly the function of respiration that requires to be modified, in consequence of the change of element in which the animal is to reside; and as if it had been necessary, conformably to the laws of animal creation, that this change should not be abruptly made, we find that Batrachian reptiles, with which this series commences, are constructed, at first, on the model of fishes; breathing the atmospheric air contained in the water by means of gills, and moving through the fluid by the same instruments of progression as fishes, which, indeed, they exactly resemble in every part of their mechanical conformation. The tadpole, which is the young of the frog, is, at first, not distinguishable in any circumstance of its internal skeleton, or in the disposition of its vital organs from the class of fishes. The head, indeed, is enlarged, but the body



immediately tapers to form a lengthened tail, by the prolongation of the spinal column, which presents a numerous series of coccygeal vertebræ, furnished with a vertical expansion of membrane to serve as a caudal fin, and with appropriate muscles for executing all the motions required in swimming. The appearance of the tadpole, in its early stage of development, is seen in Fig. 197 and 198. the