

interest. The only fossils of this order of reptiles previously described, are some vertebræ of serpents from the bone-breccia of Cette (*Oss. Foss. Tom. IV. p. 177.*).

VIII. BATRACHIANS.—The reptiles termed BATRACHIANS (from the Greek name for Frog), are characterised by the metamorphoses which they undergo in the progress of their development from the young to the adult state; the Frog, Toad, and Newt, are familiar examples of this order. Their organs of aerial respiration consist of a pair of lungs; but in their young state they are provided with gills, supported, as in fishes, by cartilaginous arches. These organs disappear in most species, when the animals arrive at maturity; but in a few genera, as the *Siren* and *Proteus*, they are persistent. The skeletons of these reptiles present corresponding modifications. The skull is, for the most part, much depressed, and the cerebral cavity small; it is united to the vertebral column by *two* distinct condyles, situated on the sides of the occipital or cranio-spinal aperture. The vertebral column, which in some genera (as for example, in the frog) is very short, and reduced to eight or ten bones, is composed, in the higher organized Batrachians, of concavo-convex vertebræ, as in the Crocodile; but in the lower type, as the *Siren*, *Proteus*, and *Axolotl*, the vertebræ are biconcave, as in numerous species of fossil Saurians. The ribs are merely rudimentary; a condition which has relation