

“Thus, like Milton’s fiend, all-qualified for all services and all elements, the creature was a fit companion for the kindred reptiles that swarmed in the seas, or crawled on the shores, of a turbulent planet :

“ The Fiend,  
O’er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,  
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,  
And sinks, or swims, or wades, or creeps, or flies.

*Paradise Lost*, Book II., line 947.

“With flocks of such-like creatures flying in the air, and shoals of Ichthyosauri and Plesiosauri swarming in the ocean, and gigantic Crocodiles and Tortoises crawling on the shores of primæval lakes and rivers—air, sea, and land must have been strangely tenanted in these early periods of our infant world.”\*

The strange structure of this animal gave rise to most contradictory opinions from the earlier naturalists. One supposed it to be a bird, another a bat, and others a flying reptile. Cuvier was

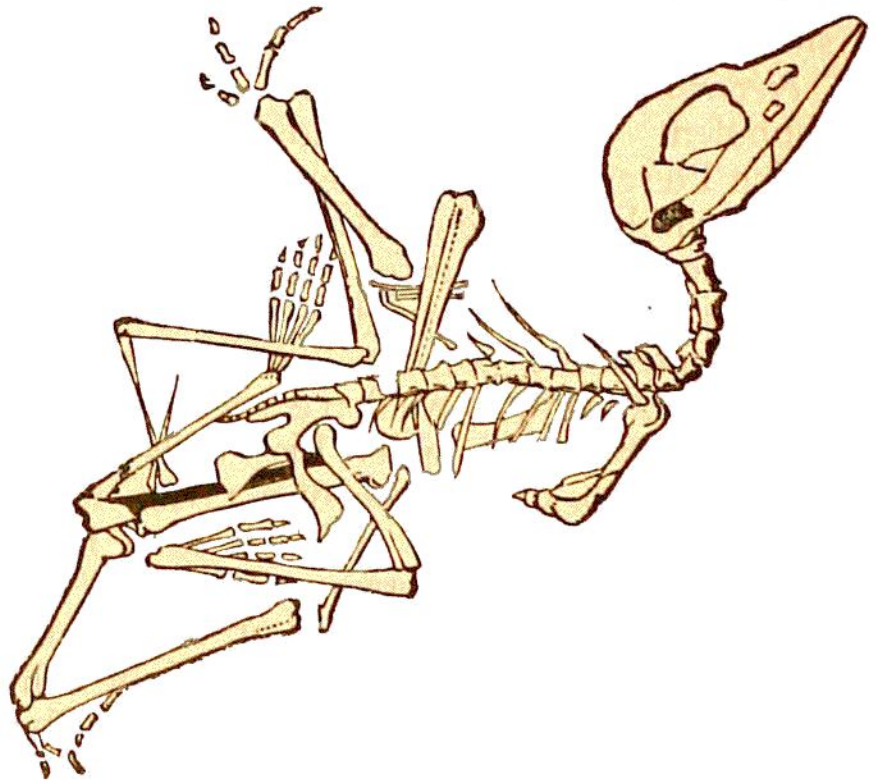


Fig. 106.—*Pterodactylus brevirostris*.

the first to detect the truth, and to prove, from its organisation, that the animal was a Saurian. “Behold,” he says, “an animal which in its osteology, from its teeth to the end of its claws, presents all the characters of the Saurians; nor can we doubt that their characteristics existed in its integuments and softer parts, in its scales, its circulation, its generative organs: it was at the same time provided with the means of flight; but when stationary it could not have made much use of its anterior extremities, even if it did not keep them always folded

\* Professor Buckland on the Pterodactylus. “*Trans. Geol. Soc.*,” 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 217.