

quently the most ancient Amniota, then the origin of this main class must necessarily have taken place in the preceding period, towards the end of the primary, namely, in the Permian period. However, all other remains of Reptiles, which were formerly believed to have been found in the Permian and the Coal system, or even in the Devonian system, have been proved to be either not remains of Reptiles at all, or to belong to a more recent date (for the most part to the Trias). (Compare Plate XIV.)

The common hypothetical primary form of all Amniotic animals, which we may call *Protamnion*, and which was possibly nearly related to the *Proterosaurus*, very probably stood upon the whole mid-way between salamanders and lizards, in regard to its bodily formation. Its descendants divided at an early period into two different lines, one of which became the common primary form of Reptiles and Birds, the other the primary form of Mammals.

Of all the three classes of Amniota, *Reptiles* (Reptilia, or Pholidota, also called Sauria in the widest sense), remain at the lowest stage of development, and differ least from their ancestors, the Amphibia. Hence they were formerly universally included among them, although their whole organization is much more like that of Birds than Amphibia. There now exist only four orders of Reptiles, namely,—Lizards, Serpents, Crocodiles, and Tortoises. They, however, form but a poor remnant of the exceedingly various and highly developed host of Reptiles which lived during the Mesolithic, or Secondary epoch, and predominated over all other Vertebrata. The immense development of Reptiles during the Secondary epoch is so characteristic that we could as well name it after those animals as after the