

form of Pterodactyles. The earth was probably at that time too much covered with water, and those portions of land which had emerged above the surface, were too frequently agitated by earthquakes, inundations, and atmospheric irregularities, to be extensively occupied by any higher order of quadrupeds than reptiles.

As the history of these reptiles, and also that of the vegetable remains,* of the secondary for-

ficient for the great purposes of the Creator, when the earth was rendered fit for the habitation of man. They do, indeed, afford the wandering savages of Australia a partial supply of food; but it is more than doubtful that any of the species will be preserved by civilized man on the score of utility. The more valuable and tractable ruminants are already fast encroaching on the plains where the kangaroo was once the sole representative of the graminivorous Mammalia.

“It is interesting, however, to observe, that the Marsupials, including the Monotremes, form a very complete series, adapted to the assimilation of every form of organic matter; and, no doubt, with enough of instinctive precaution, to preserve themselves from extermination, when surrounded with enemies of no higher intellectual powers than the Reptilia. It would, indeed, be a strong support to the consideration of them as a distinct ovoviviparous sub-class of Mammals, if they should be found, as hitherto, to be the sole representatives of the highest class of Vertebrata, in the secondary strata.”—R. Owen.

* The vegetable remains of the secondary strata differ from those of the transition period, and are very rarely accumulated into beds of valuable coal. The imperfect coal of the Cleveland Moorlands near Whitby, on the coast of Yorkshire, and that of Brora in the county of Sutherland, occurs in the lower region of the oolite formation; that of Bückeberg in Nassau, is in the lower region of the same formation, and is of superior quality.