

SECTION III.

FOSSIL SAURIANS.

IN those distant ages that elapsed during the formation of strata of the secondary series, so large a field was occupied by reptiles, referrible to the order of Saurians, that it becomes an important part of our enquiry to examine the history and organization of these curious relics of ancient creations, which are known to us only in a fossil state. A task like this may appear quite hopeless to persons unaccustomed to the investigation of subjects of such remote antiquity; yet Geology, as now pursued, with the aid of comparative anatomy, supplies abundant evidence of the structure and functions of these extinct families of reptiles; and not only enables us to infer from the restoration of their skeletons, what may have been the external form of their bodies; but instructs us also as to their economy and habits, the nature of their food, and even of their organs of digestion. It further shows their relations to the then existing condition of the world, and to the other forms of organic life with which they were associated.

The remains of these reptiles bear a much greater resemblance to one another, than to those