

lizards of the present. It is a favorite inference with a certain class of the progressive geologists, that the oxygen of the atmosphere at that period was less in proportion to its mass than it is now. But then may we not inquire, if there was less oxygen in the present atmosphere than there actually is, could the membranous reptile lung supply the demands of the system; and is not the constituent proportion of oxygen the quantity required to give the creature the power to breathe at all? I say it is not always safe to reason from structural affinity to physical conditions. If we take any other organ, as the eye, and draw from its structure and condition analogous inferences concerning the quantity of light, we may see where it will lead us. A class of progressive geologists, maintaining that in the early periods of life the light of the globe was dim, and that but few rays shone through the hazy atmosphere, find in support of this doctrine the fossil remains of a fish or a lizard with enormous eye sockets. He believes that the large eye was adapted to a dim state of the atmosphere. Another person finds a fossil with very small bony sockets. In this case, too, it may be said the eye was very small, and hence it was adapted to an exceeding intense light—to the sun when it shone fiercely from its throne in the heavens. But again, a fossil is found entirely destitute of an eye socket, and not a vestige of an organ of vision can be found; hence there was a time when the earth was shrouded in darkness, for in darkness animals have no need of eyes, and light would be useless to animals destitute of the visual organ. But then we find all these states of the eye in the present arrangements for supplying the world with light. The *Pomatomus telescopium*, a fish of the Mediterranean, which lives in very deep water, has a remarkably large eye. It is the position which it occupies that requires the large eye, and that large eye is adapted to its abode; and if only one-half of the light of the sun was extinguished, it probably would be unable to see at all. And just so with the reptile, if one-half of the oxygen of the atmosphere was withdrawn from it, all reptiles would die. The mole has a very small eye, but that