

**PHASES OF ANIMAL
LIFE. PAST
AND PRESENT**

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Phases of Animal Life. Past and Present by R. Lydekker

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R. LYDEKKER

**PHASES OF ANIMAL
LIFE. PAST
AND PRESENT**

PHASES OF ANIMAL LIFE

PAST AND PRESENT.

BY R. LYDEKKER, B.A. (CANTAB.)



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PREFACE.

THE following Essays are, by the kind permission of the Editor, reproduced from KNOWLEDGE, with some emendations, and a few additional illustrations.

They are intended to illustrate in a popular manner a few of the various modes in which animals—especially vertebrates—are adapted to similar conditions of existence; and also to demonstrate some of the more remarkable types of structure obtaining among the higher vertebrates. It will be found that while some of the Essays form a continuous series, others are totally unconnected with those to which they stand in juxtaposition. While living forms are by no means neglected, especial attention is concentrated on the less known, strange, and often gigantic creatures which have now passed away for ever, and are revealed to us—it may be but obscurely—only by their dry bones.

The series has, the author flatters himself, met with a favourable reception in its original form; and he trusts that it may obtain at least equal approval in its present guise.

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PHASES OF ANIMAL LIFE, PAST AND PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

MAIL-CLAD ANIMALS.

AMONG civilised nations throughout the world the practice of protecting their fighting-men by coats of mail, which prevailed so extensively during the middle ages, has been entirely abandoned; the cuirass of the English Household Cavalry and of the French Cuirassiers being a survival, or, as naturalists would say, a rudiment, of the complete coat-of-mail, which is retained more on account of the smartness which it adds to the equipment than for any practical use as a protection. The use of armour as a protection has, indeed, been transferred from men's bodies to the sides of ships of battle; and even there it appears problematical whether the ever-increasing weight of the armour which is necessary to keep pace with the development in the size and speed of the missiles employed against it will not eventually become so burdensome as to lead to its abandonment.