

again to M. Cuvier, to thank him for his advice, and, at the same time, to confess his error. 'You see,' said M. Cuvier, smiling, 'that my touchstone was a good one.'

We have already alluded to the circumstances which drew his attention more particularly to the mollusca. Previously to his time, naturalists had adopted the division of animals into the vertebrate and invertebrate, that is, such as had, and such as had not, a spine or back-bone. This last was, it will be observed, merely a *negative* character and therefore should never be employed where *positive* characters can be obtained. The consequence of adopting it had been, that animals of the most incongruous descriptions were found thrown together, and nothing but confusion reigned in this branch of the science, until Cuvier, in a memoir on the invertebrate animals, read before the Society of Natural History, 10 May, 1795, established the true mode in which they should be classed, and distinguished the mollusca from the zoophytes, and certain articulata, with which they had been mixed up, on grounds drawn from their internal organization,—which grounds, therefore, must be as permanent as the nature of animals is invariable. Linnæus made the mistake of confining himself too much to the consideration of one or two characters; it was thus that he came to place *man*, *ape* and *bat* in the same order, because they had each four incisor teeth in the upper, and as many in the lower jaw.* The attempts to correct these anomalies made by men who confined their view to the particular defect they sought to remedy, and never thought of seeking for its cause; by examining the system from whence it sprung, only rendered "confusion worse confounded." Linnæus was in danger of sharing Aristotle's fate, and being crushed beneath the weight of commentators, *servile pecus*; when Cuvier arose to draw order out of irregularity, and exhibit the philosophy of Natural History. He set out with three leading principles: 1st. Every animal is formed for a definite end; therefore, to enable it to accomplish that end, there must be a

* Even this is now known not to be an invariable character.