

could only glance over but a very trifling part. A choice was to be made therefore, and we did not hesitate. The class of fossils which forms the object of this work at once determined us, because we saw that it is at the same time more pregnant with precise results, and yet less known and more rich in novel matters of research. (1)

#### PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF THE FOSSIL BONES OF QUADRUPEDS.

It is apparent that the bones of quadrupeds conduct us, by various reasonings, to more precise results than any other relics of organized bodies.

In the first place, they characterize more clearly the revolutions which have effected them. Shells prove that the sea was once where they are now found; but their change of species could only at the utmost proceed from slight variations in the nature of the liquid, or merely in its temperature.

They might have had relation to causes still more accidental. There is nothing to assure us that at the bottom of the sea, certain species, even certain genera, after having occupied for a larger or shorter period determinate situations, have not been forced away by others. Here, on the contrary, all is precise; the appearance of the bones of quadrupeds, particu-

(1) My work has in fact proved the situation of this subject when I took it up in spite of the admirable labours of Camper, Pallas, Blumenbach, Merk, Sæmmering, Rusenmuller, Fischer, Faujas, Home, and other learned men, whose works I have quoted with much care in those chapters of my books to which they relate.