

guide me through this labyrinth. I knew, for instance, that though naturalists have been disputing, and are still disputing, about species and genera, they all distinguished the things themselves in pretty much the same manner. What A would call a species, B called only a variety or a race; but then B might call a sub-genus the very same aggregate of individuals which A called a species; or what A called a genus was considered by B as a family or an order. Now it was this something called no matter how, for which I tried to find out characters which would lead all to call it by the same name; thus limiting the practical difficulty in the application of the name to a question of accuracy in the observations, and no longer allowing it to be an eternal contest about mere nomenclature.

At this stage of my investigation it struck me, that the character of the writings of eminent naturalists might throw some light upon the subject itself. There are authors, and among them some of the most celebrated contributors to our knowledge in Natural History, who never busied themselves with classification, or paid only a passing notice to this subject, whilst they are, by universal consent, considered as the most successful biographers of species; such are Buffon, Reaumur, Roesel, Trembley, Smeathman, the two Hubers, Bewick, Wilson, Audubon, Naumann, etc. Others have applied themselves almost exclusively to the study of genera. Latreille is the most prominent zoölogist of this stamp; whilst Linnæus and Jussieu stand highest among botanists for their characteristics of genera, or at least for their early successful attempts at tracing the natural limits of genera. Botanists have thus far been more successful than zoölogists in characterizing natural families, though Cuvier and Latreille have done a great deal in that same direction in Zoölogy, whilst Linnæus was the first to introduce orders in the classification of animals. As to the higher groups, such as classes and types, and even the orders, we find again Cuvier leading the procession, in which have followed all the naturalists of this century.

Now let us inquire what these men have done in particular to distinguish themselves especially, either as biographers of species, or as characterizers of genera, of families, of orders, of classes, and of types. And should it appear that in each case they have been considering their subject from some particular point of view, it strikes me that what has been acknowledged unconsciously as constituting the particular eminence or distinction of these men, might very properly be proclaimed, with grateful consciousness of their services, as the characteristic of that kind of groups which each of them has most successfully illustrated; and I hope every unprejudiced naturalist will agree with me in this respect.

As to the highest divisions of the animal kingdom, first introduced by Cuvier under the name of *embranchements*, (and which we may well render by the good old English word *branch*.) he tells us himself that they are founded upon distinct plans