

by Cuvier, with the addition of Gordius; while his class STERELMINTHA has the same circumscription as the order INTESTINAUX PARENCHYMATEUX of Cuvier. Generally speaking, it should not be understood that the secondary divisions mentioned by the different authors, whose systems I have analyzed here, were established by them. They are frequently borrowed from the results obtained by special investigators of isolated classes. But it would lead me too far, to enter here into a discussion of all these details.

This growing resemblance of the modern systems of Zoölogy is a very favorable sign of our times. It would, indeed, be a great mistake to assume, that it is solely owing to the influence of different authors upon one another; it is, on the contrary, to a very great extent, the result of our better acquaintance with Nature. When investigators, at all conversant with the present state of our science, must possess nearly the same amount of knowledge, it is self-evident that their views can no longer differ so widely as they did when each was familiar only with a part of the subject. A deeper insight into the animal kingdom must, in the end, lead to the conviction that it is not the task of zoölogists to introduce order among animals, but that their highest aim should be simply to read the natural affinities which exist among them, so that the more nearly our knowledge embraces the whole field of investigation, the more closely will our opinions coincide.

As to the value of the classes adopted by Owen, I may further remark that recent investigations, of which he might have availed himself, have shown that the Cirripedia and his Epizoa are genuine Crustacea, and that the Entozoa can no longer be so widely separated from the Annelata as in his system. With reference to the other classes, I refer the reader to my criticism of older systems, and to the first section of this Chapter.

It is a great satisfaction for me to find that the views I have advocated in the preceding sections, respecting the natural relations of the leading groups of the animal kingdom, coincide so closely with the classification of that distinguished zoölogist, Milne-Edwards, lately presented by him as the expression of his present views of the natural affinities of animals. He is the only original investigator who has recently given his unqualified approbation to the primary divisions first proposed by Cuvier, admitting, of course, the rectifications among the group of secondary rank, rendered necessary by the progress of science, to which he has himself so largely contributed.

As to the classes adopted by Milne-Edwards, I have little to add to what I have already stated before, with reference to other classifications. Though no longer overruling the idea of plan, that of complication of structure has still too much influence with Milne-Edwards, inasmuch as it leads him to consider as classes, groups of animals which differ only in degree, and are therefore only orders.