

and entangled group the fishes of the first period of geologic history, with fishes of which we do not find a trace save in the existing scene of things, and of the highest families of their class with families that occupy the lowest place. But we live in an age in which even the benefactors of the world of mind cannot make false steps with impunity; and so, while Agassiz's *three* ichthyic orders will continue to be recognized by the palæontologist as the orders of three great geologic periods, the *Suctorii* have already been struck from off his higher fishes by the classification of Muller and Owen, and carried to that lowest point in the scale (indicated by Linnæus and Oken) which their inferior standing renders so obviously the natural one. Some of my readers may perhaps remember how finely Bacon, in his "Wisdom of the Ancients," interprets the old mythologic story of Prometheus. Prometheus, says the philosopher, had conferred inestimable favors on men, by moulding their forms into shape, and bringing them fire from heaven; and yet they complained of him and his teachings to Jupiter. And the god, instead of censuring their ingratitude, was pleased with the complaint, and rewarded them with gifts. In putting nature to the question, it is eminently wholesome to be doubting, cross-examining, complaining; ever demanding of our masters and benefactors the philosophers, that they should reign over us, not arbitrarily and despotically,

"Like the old kings, with high exacting looks,  
Sceptred and globed,"

but like our modern constitutional monarchs, who govern by law; and, further, that an appeal from their decisions on all subjects within the jurisdiction of Nature should for ever lie open to Nature herself. The seeming ingratitude of such