

when a mere child, by looking over the pages of Buffon, and had with much ardour taken to the observation of insects and plants. In Normandy, the treasures of the sea were opened to him. Gradually his dissections and descriptions, though not published, came to the notice of some of the leading naturalists of France, and he was eventually induced to come to Paris, where, after filling various appointments, he was elected to the chair of Comparative Anatomy in 1795.

Cuvier's splendid career belongs mainly to the history of biology. We are only concerned here in noting how he came to be interested in geological questions. He tells himself that some *Terebratulæ* from the rocks at Fécamp suggested to him the idea of comparing the fossil forms with living organisms. When he settled in Paris, he pursued this idea, never losing an opportunity of studying the fossils to be found in the different collections. He began by gathering together as large a series as he could obtain of skeletons of living species of vertebrate animals, as a basis for the comparison and determination of extinct forms. As a first essay in the new domain which he was to open up to science, he read to the Institute, at the beginning of 1796, a memoir in which he demonstrated that the fossil elephant belonged to a different species from either of the living forms. Two years later, having had a few bones brought to him from the gypsum quarries of Montmartre, he saw that they indicated some quite unknown animals. Further research qualified him to reconstruct the skeletons, and to demonstrate their