

In the preliminary discourse of his work entitled "Ossemens Fossiles," he states that the great principle in the study of comparative anatomy is this—that in every animal the several parts have such a mutual relation, both in form and function, that if any part were to undergo an alteration, in even a slight degree, it would be rendered incompatible with the rest; so that if any part were to be changed, all the other parts must undergo a corresponding change: and thus any part, taken separately, is an index of the character of all the rest. This law of the co-relation of parts is indeed so defined, that even a portion of a bone may often serve to verify the species of the animal to which it belonged (p. xlv).

We know how successfully Cuvier has applied the foregoing principle in establishing the true character of fossil species, of which the imperfect remains, or fragments of remains, are both few and of rare occurrence. The permanency however of specific character does not hold in every part of the organization; and hence there is an occasional impediment to the application of the principle: but the variation never proceeds beyond certain limits; and therefore no more interferes, eventually, with the uniformity of the specific character of animals, than the periodical oscillations of the celestial bodies counteract the general regularity of their motions.