

which inhabit our smaller streams; and no sooner does an individual succeed in expelling his weaker companions from some eighteen inches or two feet of territory, than straight way the exultation of conquest converts the faded and freckled olive of his back and sides into a glow of crimson and bright green. Nature furnishes him with a regal robe for the occasion. Immediately on his deposition, however, — and events of this kind are even more common under than out of the water, — his gay colors disappear, and he sinks into his original and native ugliness.\*

But of color, as I have said, though thus important, the ichthyologist can learn almost nothing from Geology. The perfect restoration of even a Cuvier are blank outlines. We just know by a wonderful accident that the Siberian elephant was red. A very few of the original tints still remain among the fossils of our north country Lias. The ammonite

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\* "In the *Magazine of Natural History*," says Captain Brown, in one of his notes to White's *Selborne*, "we have a curious account of the pugnacious propensities of these little animals. 'Having at various times,' says a correspondent, 'kept these little fish during the spring and part of the summer months, and paid close attention to their habits. I am enabled from my own experience to vouch for the facts I am about to relate. I have frequently kept them in a deal tub, about three feet two inches wide, and about two feet deep. When they are put in for some time, probably a day or two, they swim about in a shoal, apparently exploring their new habitation. Suddenly one will take possession of the tub, or, as it will sometimes happen, the bottom, and will instantly commence an attack upon his companions; and if any of them venture to oppose his sway, a regular and most furious battle ensues. They swim round and round each other with the greatest rapidity, biting, (their mouths being well furnished with teeth,) and endeavoring to pierce each other with their lateral spines, which, on this occasion, are projected. I have witnessed a battle of this sort which lasted