The Introduction presents, as it were, the prelude to this vast chapter of natural history in the simultaneous appearance of the four great types of the animal kingdom: Radiates, Mollusks, Articulates, and Vertebrates. Then comes the orderly development of the class by which the vertebrate plan was first expressed, namely, the fishes. Underlying all its divisions and subdivisions, is the average expression of the type in the past and present; the Placoids and Ganoids, with their combination of reptilian and fishlike features, characterizing the earlier geological epochs, while in the later the simple bony fishes, the Cycloids and Ctenoids, take the ascendency. Here, for the first time, Agassiz presents his "synthetic or prophetic types," namely, early types embracing, as it were, in one large outline, features afterward individualized in special groups, and never again reunited. No less striking than these general views of structural relations are the clearness and simplicity with which the distribution of the whole class of fishes in relation to the geological formations, or, in other words, to the physical history of the earth, is shown. In reading this introductory chapter, one familiar with Agassiz as a public teacher will almost hear his voice marshaling the long