

The Tertiary formations of the great basin of the Seine were destined not only to furnish a vast impetus to the development of stratigraphical geology, but to provide the first broad scientific basis for the foundation of the science of Palæontology. In this momentous development of geological science two names stand out with conspicuous prominence among those who carried on the work—Lamarck and Cuvier.

Jean-Baptiste-Pierre-Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) came of an ancient but somewhat decayed family, and was born in a village of Picardy, as the eleventh and youngest child of the Seigneur de Béarn.¹ The ancestral patrimony having become too slender to provide a living for the boy, he was designed for the church, and was sent to begin his studies under the Jesuits of Amiens. But since for centuries his ancestors had been soldiers, and he had three brothers in the army, he could not bring himself to settle down finally to the peaceful life of an ecclesiastic. The death of his father in 1760 gave him an opportunity of leaving his books and joining the French forces that were then engaged in the disastrous war which began in 1756. With no other passport than a letter of introduction from a lady in his neighbourhood to the Colonel of the Beaujolais regiment, he set out for the seat of war, mounted on a sorry nag, and attended by a poor

¹ For the biographical details of Lamarck's life I am indebted to Cuvier's *Éloge* of him in the *Recueil des Éloges Historiques*, vol. iii. p. 179, and to the excellent volume by Mr. A. S. Packard, *Lamarck, the Founder of Evolution: His Life and Work*, 1901.