

the gradations of their forms preserve an uninterrupted correspondence, even in those cases in which we cannot account for their relations.

Now, by thus adopting the method of observation as a supplementary means, when theory is no longer able to direct our views, we arrive at astonishing results. The smallest articulating surface of bone, or the smallest apophysis, has a determinate character, relative to the class, the order, the genus, and the species to which it belonged; inasmuch, that when one possesses merely a well preserved extremity of a bone, he can, by careful examination, and the aid of a tolerable analogical knowledge, and of accurate comparison, determine all these things with as much certainty as if he had the entire animal before him. I have often made trial of this method upon portions of known animals, before reposing full confidence upon it, in regard to fossil remains; and it has always proved so completely satisfactory, that I have no longer any doubts regarding the certainty of the results which it has afforded me.

It is true, that I have enjoyed all the advantages which were necessary for the undertaking; and that my favourable situation, in the Museum of Natural History at Paris, and assiduous research for nearly thirty years, have procured me skeletons of all the genera and sub-genera of quadrupeds, and even of many species in some genera, and of several varieties of some species.