

*In Civil History records are consulted, medals examined, and antique inscriptions decyphered, in order to determine the epochs of human revolutions; and verify moral events; so in Natural History we must search the archives of the world; draw from the bowels of the earth the monuments of former times; collect the fragments, and gather into one body of proofs all the indices of physical changes, which may enable us to retrace the different ages of nature. It is thus only that we can fix some points in the immensity of space, and mark the progressive stages in the eternal march of time.*