

In France, the tertiary strata are more widely spread, and many of them more fully developed, than in England : it is indeed scarcely possible to imagine a more distinct display of the series of strata in any class of rocks, than is presented, close to the very gates of Paris. In a capital so distinguished for scientific investigation, and possessing so many able and acute observers, it does, indeed, seem extraordinary, that the strata with which they were surrounded, should never have been properly examined until so recent a period, as the early part of the present century. What is daily before our eyes seldom excites attention, or is deemed deserving of much notice ; but there was another cause which long prevented the philosophers of Paris from observing the remarkable objects around them. Captivated with the generalizations of Werner, who, it was firmly believed, had unlocked all the hidden mysteries of geology, and comprised in his system all the different formations that composed the crust of the globe, they saw before them a series of strata which had no agreement with any part of the Wernerian classification ; hence, they could not avoid the painful persuasion, either that the system of Werner was incomplete, or that they were unable to apply it properly. To avoid an acknowledgment so little satisfactory, the geologists of Paris averted their attention, and that of their pupils, from nearer objects, and directed them to the mountains of Germany or Switzerland. Had not another science (comparative anatomy) come to the aid of geology, we might yet have remained unacquainted with the tertiary strata around Paris. At length, the number of skeletons of strange and unknown animals discovered in some of the strata, forcibly attracted the notice of that distinguished naturalist, Cuvier, and it was resolved to investigate attentively the geology of the whole district. M. A. Brongniart was associated with Cuvier in the investigation ; and in 1811 the result of their labours and observations was given, in a work entitled *Essai sur la Géographie Minéralogique des Environs de Paris*,—the most luminous and interesting exposition of local geology ever presented to the world ; and from this period we may date the first accurate knowledge of the tertiary strata.

The following extract from the Essay of MM. Cuvier and Brongniart, presents a general view of the arrangement of the strata round Paris :—

“ The country in which the capital of France is situated, is perhaps the most remarkable that has yet been observed, both from the succession of different soils of which it is formed, and from the extraordinary organic remains which it contains. Millions of marine shells, which alternate regularly with freshwater shells, compose the principal mass. Bones of land animals, of which the genera are entirely unknown, are found in certain parts ; other bones remarkable for their vast size, and of which some of similar genera (*quelques congénères*) exist only in distant countries, are found scattered in the upper beds. A marked character of a great irruption from the