theory of cataclysms, and pointed to a perfectly continuous and uninterrupted history in the development of all the organic inhabitants of the earth through all ages. They maintained that the animal and vegetable species of each period were derived from those of the preceding period, and were only the altered descendants of the former. This true conception, however, being opposed to Cuvier's great authority, was then unable to make way. Nay, even after Cuvier's theory of catastrophes had been completely cast out from the domain of geology by Lyell's classic "Principles of Geology," which appeared in 1830, his idea of the specific distinctness of a series of organic creations still, in many ways, maintained its influence in the science of Palæontology ("Gen. Morph." ii. 312).

By a curious coincidence, thirty years ago, almost at the same time that Cuvier's History of Creation received its death-blow by Darwin's book, another celebrated naturalist made an attempt to re-establish it, and to adopt it in the crudest manner, as a part of a teleologico-theological system of nature. This was the Swiss geologist, Louis Agassiz, who attained a great reputation by his theory of glaciers and the ice-period, borrowed from Schimper and Charpentier; he lived in North America for many years, and died there in 1873. He commenced in 1858 to publish a work planned on a very large scale, which bears the title of "Contributions to the Natural History of the United States of North America." The first volume of this work, although large and costly, owing to the patriotism of the Americans, had an unprecedented sale; its title is, "An Essay on Classification."[5]

In this essay Agassiz not only discusses the natural series