

mutability of organic species, the common descent of the individual species from common primary forms, and the unity of their organization—or the unity of the plan of structure, as it was then called.

Cuvier was the most decided opponent of these views, and, according to what we have seen, it could not be otherwise. He endeavoured to show that the nature-philosophers had no right to rear such comprehensive conclusions on the basis of the empirical knowledge then possessed, and that the unity of organization—or plan of structure of organisms—as maintained by them, did not exist. He represented the teleological (dualistic) conception of nature, and maintained that “the immutability of species was a necessary condition for the existence of a scientific history of nature.” Cuvier had the great advantage over his opponent, that he was able to bring towards the proof of his assertions things obvious to the eye; these, however, were only individual facts taken out of their connection with others. Geoffroy was not able to prove the higher and general connection of individual phenomena which he maintained, by equally tangible details. Hence Cuvier, in the eyes of the majority, gained the victory, and decided the defeat of the nature-philosophy and the supremacy of the strictly empiric tendency.

Goethe of course supported Geoffroy's views. How deeply interested he was, even in his 81st year, in this great contest is proved by the following anecdote related by Soret:—

“Monday, Aug. 2nd, 1830.—The news of the outbreak of the revolution of July arrived in Weimar to-day, and has caused general excitement. In the course of the afternoon I went to Goethe. ‘Well?’ he exclaimed as I entered.