

manuscripts and take an account of my tables in order to condense the whole in a few phrases. I have already told you that the investigation of the living fishes had suggested to me a new classification, in which families as at present circumscribed respectively received new, and to my thinking more natural positions, based upon other considerations than those hitherto brought forward. I did not at first lay any special stress on my classification. . . . My object was only to utilize certain structural characters which frequently recur among fossil forms, and which might therefore enable me to determine remains hitherto considered of little value. . . . Absorbed in the special investigation, I paid no heed to the edifice which was meanwhile unconsciously building itself up. Having however completed the comparison of the fossil species in Paris, I wanted, for the sake of an easy revision of the same, to make a list according to their succession in geological formations, with a view of determining the characteristics more exactly and bringing them by their enumeration into bolder relief. What was my joy and surprise to find that the simplest enumeration of the fossil fishes according to their geological succession was also a complete statement