

strated in the completest manner the truth of epigenesis. In fact, he had recognised development as the "sole basis of zoological classification; while in France Cuvier and Geoffroy St Hilaire were embittering each other's lives with endless merely anatomical discussions and replications, and while in Germany the cautious study of nature was given up for the spinning of Natur-philosophies and other hypothetical cobwebs."<sup>1</sup>

The position which Karl Ernst von Baer occupies in the history of science and thought is in many respects interesting and unique. He lived early enough in the century to experience the full influence of Cuvier's authority, and lived long enough to witness the great change which Darwin's writings brought on in all the natural sciences; whereas his great contemporary, Johannes Müller, passed away before the name of Darwin was known outside of his own country. In unison with Müller, and yet in an independent manner, he effectually liberated German science from the undue influence of the speculative school. And he has, probably more than any other great naturalist, recognised the importance of the three aspects which a contemplation of natural objects forces upon us: the apparent or real fixity of certain forms (the morphological view), the continued and orderly change<sup>2</sup> of these forms (the genetic view), and the apparent or real existence of a

<sup>1</sup> Huxley in Taylor's 'Scientific Memoirs,' New Series, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Very important in this respect is a lecture delivered by von Baer in 1834, with the title 'Das all-gemeinste Gesetz der Natur in aller Entwicklung (reprinted in the Brunswick edition, vol. i. p. 39 sqq.) "We must conclude that, so

far as observations now give materia' for inferences, a transformation of certain original forms of animals in the succession of generations is very probable, but only to a limited extent (p. 60), a view which von Baer maintained to the end against extreme Darwinism (see p. 37).