

of nature, so also opposes a great resistance to any sudden change of opinion. "But it is better," he says, "that a truth once perceived should struggle a long time to obtain merited attention than that everything that the ardent imagination of man produces should be easily accepted."¹

Whereby it may appear to us worthy of note that Lamarck did not stop to reflect on the existence of those sudden changes by which such powers as the "ardent imagination of man" are continually breaking through the slow action of habit. The doctrine of the mutability and variability of species, of the influence of the environment on the habits, and through them and inheritance on the forms of living creatures, was thus opposed to the prevalent doctrine of the fixity of species and the permanence and recurrence of types. Through these generalisations, and through the larger view which Lamarck took of the phenomena of nature and of life, he stepped outside of that school of natural studies which was then dominant in his country, and approached the teachings of the German philosophers of nature, such as Schelling, Oken, and Steffens, with whom Goethe is frequently associated, who, rather than limit themselves to the patient study of detail, indulged in fanciful theories on the origin of life, the genesis and metamorphosis of forms, and the ideal significance of natural phenomena and processes. A wide gap separated the speculations of the author of the '*Flore française*,' the '*Histoire des Animaux sans Vertèbres*,' and the '*Mémoires sur les Coquilles fossiles des environs de Paris*' from those of the German school, yet it cannot be denied that in

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The "Natur-
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¹ Philos. Zool., p. 15.