

CUVIER'S
ANIMAL KINGDOM.



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CUVIER'S ANIMAL KINGDOM:

ARRANGED

ACCORDING TO ITS ORGANIZATION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, AND ABRIDGED FOR THE USE
OF STUDENTS.

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS ON WOOD.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE *Règne Animale* of the illustrious CUVIER is acknowledged to furnish at once the most simple and the most philosophic view of Animated Nature; and therefore the best, not only for the professional student of that most interesting portion of the works of creation, but also for all classes of persons generally who seek (and who is there in these days who does not seek?) for general information upon that most inviting of all subjects.

Cuvier entered upon this work, which to him must have been one of heartfelt pleasure, as the summing-up of a long and active life, devoted to this his favourite study, much better qualified and prepared than any one who had previously attempted a classification of the animal kingdom. Naturally a close and scrutinising observer, intimately acquainted with the structure of animals by the most careful dissection and examination of all the forms of their organisation and all the corre-

sponding functions, learned in all that had been done by his predecessors, in free communication with all the more illustrious of his contemporary labourers in the same field, to what nation soever they happened to belong, combining with a most extended and correct knowledge of all the leading genera now inhabiting the earth, a more extensive acquaintance with those which have perished in the lapse of time and by the course of change, than any other man ever possessed, and above all, being without any preconceived theory, and therefore zealous only for the truth, this great naturalist seemed to be, above all others, the man fitted for affording such a general view of the living world as should be at once clear, striking, and faithful to its subject, and inviting, instructive, and useful to mankind generally.

By grounding his arrangement upon the organisation, he was enabled to communicate as much real information in a few instances of general description, as could have been furnished by a volume of details; and thus, while he was enabled to condense the whole into a moderate compass, all the parts became more clear, and the grand relations of the whole, in which the mighty design—the wisdom and power of God in the works of creation—became most strikingly manifest.

The mind of a truly great man like Cuvier, when condensing and concentrating the rays of knowledge, has an effect very much resembling that of a convex lens in concentrating the rays of light. If the substance of the lens be fine and transparent, and the form and fashioning true, the lens becomes eyes to the dim-sighted, magnifies the small, brings the distant near, and