

subjected by nature to the sad fate of a violent death. Among viviparous animals, bats are well known, and those carnivorous animals with crooked claws, such as cats, tygers, lions, panthers, lynxes, &c. and perhaps even bears, rats, &c. It is probable also that some sorts of fish may be found that pursue their prey principally during the night, such as the different kinds of sea dog, &c. Among insects there are various sorts which are nocturnal and depredatory. It is not therefore an isolated law in the system of living bodies, but one of those general principles which enter, as a constituent part, into the universal conception of animated nature.

In nocturnal birds, there are many generic characters, the importance of which is easily perceptible, since they influence principally the vital faculties of these animals. All the owl tribe have a head much larger than the greater part of birds; it is also more flattened, and in a manner so remarkable, that every person knows them at first sight. Their tongue is forked, their body well covered with a thick close plumage, large eyes projecting from their orbits, and surrounded with a circle of feathers; a very short neck, and feathered feet; all of which qualities are nearly distinctive marks of this species of birds.