

However, all the extent of the head is not filled with the brain in the owl: but it has, notwithstanding, all the exterior appearances of a wise and reflecting bird. Tranquil during the day, it seems to meditate profoundly: its large eyes, full of fire and penetrating to a distance in the obscurity of night, seem to give him an air of sagacity. All these characters apply, more or less, to the whole of the nocturnal species of birds: and in fact, however diffident and awkward their motions during the day may appear, however constrained and ridiculous they may seem, it is to be ascribed solely to the dazzling influence of the sun upon their eyes. Behold them, when twilight begins to cover the earth with its grey and sombre mantle: then they unfold their limbs at liberty; then they make the rocks, the ruined castle, and the dilapidated mansion echo with their melancholy hootings. The superstitious and feeling recluse who wanders among the tombs, hears this dull and plaintive voice; he believes it to come from the bosom of the earth, from the charnel-house of the dead; the light fluttering of the bird of night startles him, and he fancies he hears the unblessed dead wandering near him over the ground that covers in vain their bones. He believes that