

and the cabiai, which can neither be referred nor compared to any genera or species of the Old Continent. This sufficiently proves that the origin of these animals, peculiar to the New world, cannot be attributed merely to degeneration. However, great and powerful the effects of degeneration may be supposed, we cannot, with any appearance of reason, persuade ourselves that these animals were originally the same as those of the Old Continent. It is more reasonable to imagine that the two continents were formerly joined, and that those species which inhabited the New World, because they found the climate and soil most suitable to their nature, were separated from the rest by the irruption of the sea when it divided Asia from America. This is a natural cause, and similar ones might be conceived which would produce the same effect; for example, if the sea should make an irruption from the eastern to the western side of Asia, and thus separate the southern parts of Africa and Asia from the rest of the Continent, all the animals peculiar to the southern countries, such as the elephant, the rhinoceros, the giraffe, the zebra, the orang-outang, &c. would be, relatively to the others, the same as those of South America at present are; they