

would be entirely separated from the animals of the temperate countries, and could not be referred to an origin common to any of the species or genera which inhabit these countries, on the sole foundation that some imperfect resemblances, or distant relations, might be observed between them.

We must, therefore, to find out the origin of these animals, turn back to the time when the two continents were not separated, and refer to the first changes which happened on the surface of the globe. We must, at the same time, place before our view the two hundred species of quadrupeds as constituting thirty-eight families; and although this is not the state of nature, such as it is come down to us, and as we have represented it, but, on the contrary, a much more ancient state, which we can only attain by inductions and relations nearly as fugitive as time, which seems to have effaced their traces, we have endeavoured, by facts and monuments still existing, to return to those first ages of nature, and to exhibit those epochas which appear to be most clearly indicated.