

with attention, from the time of Aristotle to the present, not a single new species has been seen, notwithstanding the rapid motion that drags on, or dissipates the parts of matter, notwithstanding the infinite number of combinations which must have been in the space of twenty centuries, notwithstanding the fortuitous couplings of different animals, from which nothing has ever resulted but vitiated and sterile individuals, and such as have not been able to become a stock for new generations. Were the exterior and interior resemblance in some animals still greater than they are between the horse and the ass, we ought not to confound these animals, nor give them to one common origin, for if they, in fact, came from the same stock, we might bring them back to their original state by new alliances, and undo by time, what time is already supposed to have done.

We must also consider, that although nature proceeds by gradual, and frequently by imperceptible degrees, the intervals are not always the same. The more exalted the species, the fewer they are in number, and the shades by which they are separated, are more conspicuous; the smaller species, on the contrary, are very numerous, and have more affinity to each other, so that we are the more tempted to confound