

Although we cannot demonstrate that the production of a new species, by degeneration, is a thing impossible in nature, yet the number of probabilities to the contrary render it incredible, for if some species have been produced by the degeneration of others, if that of the ass absolutely originated from the horse, it can only have happened by a succession of imperceptible degrees, and there must necessarily have been a greater number of intermediate animals, the first of which would have differed but slightly in its nature from the horse, and the latter would have approached by degrees to that of the ass. Upon the ground of this supposition we might ask, what is become of these intermediate beings? Why do we not see their representatives, their descendants? and why do the two extremes alone remain?

The ass is then an ass, and not a horse degenerated; a horse with a naked tail. The ass is neither a stranger, an intruder, nor a bastard; he has like all other animals, his family, his species, and his rank; his blood is pure and untainted, and although his race is less noble, yet it is equally good, equally ancient, with that of the horse. Why then is there so much contempt for an animal so good,