

general devastation. And in those times when man himself was but half civilized, and subject to all the laws and even excesses of Nature, were there not similar inundations of the human species? Have there not been Normans, Huns, and Goths, whole nations, or rather tribes of animals bearing the human form without dwellings, and without distinction, who have suddenly rushed from their caves, and marched in tumultuous herds, and without any force but what consists in numbers, overthrown empires, destroyed nations, and having ransacked the earth, concluded by repeopling it with a race not less barbarous than themselves?

These æras, these great events, though so strongly marked in the History of Mankind, are yet only slight vicissitudes in the ordinary course of animated nature, which is in general always uniform and the same; its movements are regulated by two unchangeable wheels; the one, unbounded fecundity of every species; the other, the innumerable causes of destruction which are perpetually reducing the produce of that fecundity to a determinate measure, so as to preserve nearly the same number of individuals in each species. And as these multitudinous animals, which appear suddenly, disappear in the same manner, without augmenting