

ear, they will produce but a very small number the next. What, indeed, would become of all the fruits of the earth, of the most useful animals, or even of man himself, if these insects were to be proportionally increased after a fertile season? But no; the causes of destruction and sterility immediately follow those of an excessive multiplication. Independent of contagion, a necessary consequence of too great a mass of living matter assembled in one place, there are in every species, certain causes of death, as we shall hereafter have occasion to mention, and which are sufficient to counterbalance any preceding excess of fecundity. I must again observe that this is not to be taken in an absolute or strict sense, especially with respect to those species which do not remain entirely in a state of nature. Those which man takes care to rear are more abundant than they otherwise would be; but as his attention has its limits, so the increase which flows from it has long since been confined by unalterable bounds; and though in civilized countries, the human species and domestic animals, are more numerous than in other climates, they are never so to excess; because the very power which calls them into existence, destroys them when they become troublesome.