

especially among the smaller species, one season gives birth to several generations. They would multiply, then, more than plants, if they were not devoured by other animals. Among insects there are numbers who live upon other insects ; there are some, as the spiders, which devour with indifference their own as well as other species ; they serve for food to the birds ; and fowls, both wild and tame, are destined for the nourishment of man, or the prey of carnivorous animals. Thus violent deaths seem to be equally as necessary as natural ones ; they are both modes of destruction and renovation ; the one serves to preserve nature in a perpetual spring, and the other maintains the order of her productions, and limits the number of each species. They are both effects dependent upon general causes ; every individual falls of itself at the end of a certain period, or if prematurely destroyed it is from being superabundant. How many are there whose existence is, as it were, anticipated ? How many flowers are cut down in the spring ? How many seeds are annihilated before their developement ? Man and carnivorous animals feed upon individuals which are either wholly formed, or nearly so ; flesh, eggs, grain, and seeds of every species, form their usual nourishment,