

perfections admit the existence of evil; but at the same time they take care that the aggregate result of the greatest evils should be beneficial.

Nor would we limit this position to evils springing out of the nature or the changes of the inanimate world; for some of the severest evils are dependent upon the organization or operation of animate nature. Man, for instance, finds himself often grossly annoyed by some species of the inferior animals, in his comfort, property, and even life. And he wonders why infinite wisdom and benevolence should permit certain species to exist, when they seem fitted only to annoy the rest. But he knows not what he desires when he wishes their extinction. For such is the balance of organic nature, that to strike out even one species, is like removing a link from a chain. Once broken, every other link is affected, and the whole chain lies useless upon the ground. Or, to speak without a figure, if you blot out certain species of animals or plants, you disturb the balance of the whole system of organic nature; nor can you tell where the disturbance thus introduced will end. It may lead to the excessive multiplication of species still more injurious than those you have destroyed. At any rate, since the perfections of the Deity lead to the conclusion that the existing proportion between different species is the best, all things considered, and change in the balance must be injurious, we may conclude, that though noxious animals and plants may produce individual inconvenience and injury, the aggregate effects upon the whole of organic nature are salutary, and, therefore, indicative of benevolence.

Similar reasoning will, I think, apply to the existence of that large class of animals called carnivorous. These are evidently intended to prey upon other animals; and for this purpose they are provided with weapons for seizing and destroying their prey. It is often extremely painful to a man of kind feelings to witness the scenes of blood and havoc which these flesh-eating animals produce. But we forget two things. The first is, that in order to keep the numbers of animated beings full in the different tribes, it is necessary that there should be a great excess of numbers created, to meet all the casualties to which they are exposed; and that excess must in some way or other be removed from life. Secondly, all the enjoyment of the carnivorous races is so much clear gain to the sum of