

the greatest number of individuals; it may be proper to premise a few words upon this subject, before we enter on the history of that large portion of the animals of a former world, whose office was to effect the destruction of life.

The law of universal mortality being the established condition, on which it has pleased the Creator to give being to every creature upon earth, it is a dispensation of kindness to make the end of life to each individual as easy as possible. The most easy death is, proverbially, that which is the least expected; and though, for moral reasons peculiar to our own species, we deprecate the *sudden* termination of our mortal life; yet, in the case of every inferior animal, such a termination of existence is obviously the most desirable. The pains of sickness, and decrepitude of age, are the usual precursors of death, resulting from gradual decay: these, in the human race alone, are susceptible of alleviation from internal sources of hope and consolation; and give exercise to some of the highest charities, and most tender sympathies of humanity. But, throughout the whole creation of inferior animals, no such sympathies exist; there is no affection or regard for the feeble and aged; no alleviating care to relieve the sick; and the extension of life through lingering stages of decay and of old age, would to each individual be a scene of protracted misery. Under such a