

It has been questioned by some whether the present races of animals have not all, in the lapse of ages, undergone some alterations from the primitive types. The only way by which this can be at all ascertained is by consulting the oldest descriptions of them, and the oldest sculptures; and these, I think, will prove that no such alteration has taken place.

In considering the general distribution of animals we may further remark that some are stationary, while others, at certain periods, migrate or shift their quarters from one climate or region to another.

In considering the former, I shall not here enlarge on the stations of the different tribes further than as they are connected with the great object, which it is my duty to illustrate. With respect to many it may be observed, that though perhaps widely dispersed, yet they have their metropolis.* Thus the gigantic whales, though they are sometimes found in low latitudes, not, however, within the tropics, yet their grand rendezvous is in the arctic and antarctic seas; furnishing a strong proof that in these they find the greatest supply of their appropriate food. The giant terrestrial Mammalia, on the contrary, confine themselves to intra-tropical regions, where the luxuriance of vegetation best corresponds with their enormous consumption of food. Amongst the birds the Vulture, though one species, the Lammer-Geyer,† comes as far north as the Swiss Alps, generally most abounds in hot climates, and is often of essential service in preventing the infection, likely to be produced by putrid animals; to these birds our Saviour's words doubtless allude, "*Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*;" the species he had in his eye was probably the Egyptian Vulture,‡ the services of which in Egypt are strikingly described by Hasselquist.

* See Introd. to Ent. iv. Lett. xlix.

† Vultur barbatus.

‡ Vultur percnopterus, L.