

when they die, the air is infected, and much sickness is the consequence. All this tribe of mice appear to live on roots, bulbs, grain, nuts, &c., and have generally a very short tail.

The Campagnol,* or short-tailed rat of Pennant, is equally destructive; in some years their numbers are so prodigious, that they overflow, as it were, a whole district, and by their ravages produce famine and desolation. This effect is stated to have been produced in certain parts of France where an extent of forty square leagues was devastated by them. In their progress these animals are preyed upon by the predaceous quadrupeds and birds, by whose incessant attacks their numbers, in ordinary seasons, are kept within the bounds assigned them by the Creator, as are the Locusts by the Locust-eating Thrush,† and the Aphides or Plantlice which may be denominated the Locusts of Britain, and which are stated sometimes almost to darken the air, by the lady-birds and aphidivorous flies.

All these migrations are produced by a different cause from those periodical ones which take place, after intervals, or at certain seasons, in various other animals of every grade; and though a scarcity of food, or straitened circumstances or accommodations may be the impelling motives, yet these are produced by an unusual increase in the numbers of the migrating species, so that they are driven to seek an outlet by which their supernumeraries may pass off and relieve them from the pressure, or the whole population, deserting an exhausted country, may establish themselves in better quarters.

In all the instances that I have here adduced, the object, at the first blush, as far as the Deity may be supposed to be concerned in these outbreaks, appears rather punitive than beneficent; but when we dip below the surface, and

* *Arvicola arvalis*.

† *Turdus gryllivorus*.