

beings have a natural tendency to increase and multiply; and while there is space this tendency is beneficial; but when plants or animals exceed certain limits, they stand in each other's way, and prevent all further growth or healthy progress. The herbivorous animals, in various ways, serve as a countercheck to this tendency, and keep the vegetable tribes from encroaching too much upon each other. As I have detailed the effects of this when I spoke of the ravages of the locusts, and shall have occasion again to notice it, I shall not now enlarge further upon it.

I am next to consider another general function of animals, or the effects they produce upon their own body: and here the reason just alluded to, their constant tendency to multiply so as to be injurious to each other, and also to vegetable productions, especially those that are important to man or beast, which in the present state of things is so constantly recurring, renders it necessary that some bounds should be set to their increase, which Providence effects by letting them loose against each other. The great object of the Creator is the maintenance of the whole system of creation in order and beauty, and this he is pleased to accomplish, not always by the *concord* but by the seeming *discord* of the agents he employs.

When we take a first view of nature, we are struck by a scene which seems to be one of universal conflict, for the very heavens appear not clear from the charge: the philosopher who studies them tells us of antagonist powers, that are perpetually striving with each other, the one to absorb all things in a common centre, the other to dissever them, and scatter them in illimitable space; and when we turn to the earth, what a scene of destruction is before us! The king of the terrestrial globe, man, constantly engaged in a struggle with his fellow man, often laying waste the earth, slaughtering its inhabitants, and deforming its productions