

other species of the genus have the same commission. The *rove-beetles* * bury themselves in excrement in order to devour the grubs that frequent it. I have before mentioned † the wasp-beetle; there are others which, in the same way, attack those of the hive and other bees. ‡ Another has a more remarkable instinct, by which it is impelled to seek its nutriment in the slimy snail. § There is an insect much resembling a bird-louse, that is parasitic on wild bees, which has been thought to be produced from the eggs of the great oil-beetle, || but some doubt still hangs on the fact. ¶

Another tribe of beetles have a different commission from their Creator, and instead of *living* ones, feed upon *dead* animals, of every description. To this tribe belong the burying beetles, long celebrated for the manner in which they bury pieces of flesh, to which they have committed an egg; ** other carrion beetles †† may be found in considerable numbers of various species and kinds, under every carcass; ‡‡ even *bones*, after they are denuded of the flesh, are attended by certain insects of this Order, by whose efforts they are completely stripped of every remnant of muscle. §§ Some even find their nutriment in the interior of horns. |||

Lacordaire observes that the carcasses dry so rapidly in South America, that few necrophagous insects are found there: and that even in the Pampas, and at Buenos Ayres, where animals decompose as in Europe, there are but few of these insects: but their place is supplied by innumerable birds of prey. As soon as an animal is killed, they fly in

* Staphylinus. L.

† See above, p. 243.

‡ Clerus apiarius, and alvearius.

§ Cochleoctonus.

|| Meloe.

¶ See Introd. to Ent. iii. 162, note 6.

** Ibid. i. 352.

†† Silpha. L.

‡‡ Dermestes. Byrrhus, &c.

§§ Nitidula, &c.

||| Trox.