

being so as to preserve or modify the form, determine this developement and progress; but after the period of youth when they are collected in individual organs, or escaping by the action of the body upon them to which they belong, they may form new combinations, and they preserve, according to the different parts in which they have existed, a disposition to reunite so as to present the same forms and reproduce, consequently, individuals similar to those from which they emanated. This system had few partizans: it was too difficult to form an idea of that power by virtue of which, molecules removed from all parts of a body should preserve a tendency to replace themselves in a similar order. Besides, the researches of Haller on the formation of the chicken contradicted too strongly this opinion; the identity of the membranes of the nascent animal, with those of the egg, was too opposite to the hypothesis of an animal ulteriorly forward. The observations of Spallanzani upon the same liquors and the same infusions seemed equally to destroy, even in its principle, the system of organic molecules. But when disengaged from the trammels of this system, Buffon is then a painter, historian, and philosopher. With what interest, traversing the universe in his steps, we behold man, who is fundamentally the same every where, slowly modified by the continued action of climate, soil, habits, prejudices; changing in colour and physiognomy, the same as in taste and opinion; acquiring or losing strength, and beauty, the same as intelligence, sensibility and virtue. With what pleasure in his history we trace the progress of man and even his decline; we study the laws of that constant correspondence between the physical changes of his senses or organs, and those which operate on the understanding or on the passions; we learn to know the mechanism of our senses, their relations with our sensations or our ideas, the errors to which they expose us, the manner in which we learn to see, to touch, to understand, and how the child, whose feeble and uncertain eyes that behold only a confused mass of colours, attains by habit and reflection, to seize in a single glance the extent of a vast horizon, and even to the power of creating and combining images. With what curiosity we observe those details which relate to the most lively of our pleasures and the most delightful of our sentiments, those secrets of nature and of modesty, to which the majesty of style and the severity