

identified with those that are past. This accumulation of experience in one man, almost extends the limits of his being to infinity. He is born no more than a simple individual, like other animals, capable only of attending to present sensations; but he becomes afterwards nearly the being which we supposed to represent the whole species; he reads what has past, sees the present, and judges of the future; and in the torrent of time, which carries off and absorbs all the individuals of the universe, he perceives that the species are permanent, and Nature invariable. As the relations of objects are always the same, to him the order of time appears to be nothing; he considers the laws of renovation as only counterbalancing those of permanency. An uninterrupted succession of similar beings, is, in effect, only equivalent to the perpetual existence of one of them.

What purposes then are gained by this immense train of generations, this profusion of germs, many thousands of which are abortive for one that is brought into life? Does not this perpetual propagation of beings, which are alternately destroyed and renewed, uniformly exhibit the same scene, and occupy the same proportion in Nature? From what cause proceed