

which are assimilated indifferently the organic particles of all animals or vegetables which have been destroyed by death, or consumed by time. The brute particles, of which part of their composition was formed, returned to the common mass of inanimate matter; but the organic particles, whose existence is permanent, are again resumed by organized bodies: they are extracted at first from the earth by vegetables, and then absorbed by animals who feed thereon; and thus serve for the support, growth, and expansion of both. By this constant and perpetual circulation from body to body, they serve to animate all organized beings. These living substances in quantity are always the same, and differ only in form and appearance. In fertile ages, and when population is the greatest, the whole surface of the earth seems to be covered with men, domestic animals, and useful plants. But in the times of famine and depopulation, the ferocious animals, poisonous insects, parasitical plants, and useless herbs, resume, in their turn, dominion over the earth. To man these changes are material, but to Nature they are perfectly indifferent. The silk worm so inestimable to the former, is to the latter only a caterpillar of the mulberry tree. Though this caterpillar,  
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