

which so materially assists in the supply of our luxuries, should disappear; though the plants, from which our domestic animals procure their nourishment, should be devoured by other caterpillars; though still others should destroy the substance of our corn before the harvest; in short, though man and the larger animals should be starved by the inferior tribes, Nature would not be less abundant nor less alive; she never protects one at the expence of another, but especially supports the whole. As to individuals she is regardless of number; she considers them only as successive images of the same impression; as passing shadows of which the species is the substance.

In earth, air, and water, then, there exists a certain quantity of organic matter which cannot be destroyed, but which is constantly assimilated in a certain number of moulds, that are perpetually undergoing destruction and renewal: these moulds, or rather individuals, tho' varying in number in every species, are nevertheless always the same, that is, proportioned to the quantity of living matter; and this appears to be absolutely the case, for if there were any redundance of this matter, or if it were not at all times fully occupied by the individuals of  
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