

found them together in the same family ; but we should not forget that these families are our own works, that we have made them for the ease of our memories, that if we cannot comprehend the real relations of all beings, it is ourselves, not nature that is in fault, who knows not these pretended families ; and, in fact, contains only individuals.

An individual is a separate detached being, and has nothing in common with other beings, excepting that it resembles, or rather differs from them. All similar individuals which exist on the earth, are considered as composing the species of those individuals. Notwithstanding, it is neither the number nor collection of similar individuals which form the species, but the constant succession and renewing of these individuals which constitute them ; for, a being which existed for ever would not be a species. Species, then, is an abstract and general term, the meaning of which can only be determined on by considering nature in the succession of time, and in the constant destruction and renewal of beings. It is by comparing the present state of nature with that of the past, and actual individuals with former, that has given us a clear idea of what is called species : for a comparison of the number or resemblance of

B b 2

individuals,