

individuals, is only an accessory idea, and frequently independent of the first ; for, the ass resembles the horse more than the barbet the greyhound, notwithstanding the latter are but one species, since they produce fertile individuals, but the horse and ass are certainly of different species, since they produce together vicious and unfruitful individuals.

It is then in the characteristic diversity of the species, that the shades of nature are the most sensible and best marked ; we may even say, that these shades between the species are the most equal and least variable, since we may always draw a line of separation between two species : that is, between two successions of individuals, who reproduce and cannot mix, as we may also unite into one species two successions of individuals which would reproduce by mixing. This is the most fixed point that we have in Natural History ; all other resemblances, and differences that we can make in the comparison of beings, are neither so constant, real, nor certain. These intervals are the only lines of separation that will be found in this work ; we shall not divide beings otherwise than they are in fact : each species, each succession of individuals which reproduce and cannot mix, will be considered apart, and treated separately ;
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