

The prodigious Mammoth, whose enormous bones I have often viewed with astonishment, and which were at least six times bigger than those of the largest elephant, exists no longer ; although its remains have been found in Ireland, Siberia, Louisiana, and other places remote from each other. Of all species of quadrupeds this was certainly the largest and strongest, and since it has disappeared, how many smaller, weaker, and less remarkable, must have perished, without having left any evidence of their past existence? How many others have been improved or degraded by the great vicissitude of the earth and waters, by the culture or neglect of nature, by their long continuance in favourable or repugnant climates, that they are no longer the same! and yet, next to man, quadrupeds are beings whose nature is most fixed, and whose form most permanent. Birds and fishes vary more : those of insects are subject to greater variations still ; and if we descend to plants, which ought not to be excluded from animated nature, we shall be astonished at the celerity and facility with which they vary and assume new forms.

It may not be impossible, then, without inverting the order of nature, that all the animals of the new world originated from the same stock