

I shall not speak here of the varieties which are found in every species of carnivorous animals, as they are extremely slight ; because all animals which feed on flesh are the least dependent on man ; and besides, this nutriment being already prepared by Nature, they receive scarcely any of the qualities of the soil they inhabit ; besides, being endowed with strength and weapons, they have the power of chusing their own climate : consequently the three causes of change, alteration, and degeneration, of which we have spoken, can have but very slight and trivial effect on them.

After this glance at the variations peculiar to each species, a more important consideration presents itself, that of the change of the species themselves ; that ancient and immemorial degeneration made in each family, or in every genus, under which we may comprehend the proximating species. Among all terrestrial animals there are only a few detached species, which, like the human, at once compose both species and genus. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, and the giraffe, form genera, or simple species, which propagate only in a direct line, and have no collateral branches ; every other appears to form families, in which one principal trunk is generally to be recognized, and
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