

crease can take place in their number, except by resorting to the expedient which we find actually adopted, namely, that of employing the substance of one animal for the nourishment of others. Thus the identical combinations of elements, effected by the powers of vegetation, are transferred in succession from one living being to another, and become subservient to the maintenance of a great number of different animals before they finally, by the process of decomposition, revert to their original inorganic state.

“See dying vegetables life sustain,
See life dissolving vegetate again;
All forms that perish other forms supply.
By turns we catch the vital breath, and die.”—POPE.

Hence has the ordinance been issued to a large portion of the animal world that they are to maintain themselves by preying upon other animals, either consuming their substance when already dead, or depriving them of life in order to prolong their own. Such is the command given to the countless hosts of living beings which people the vast expanse of ocean; to the unnumbered tribes of insects which every spot of earth discloses; to the greater number of the feathered race; and also to a more restricted order of terrestrial animals. To many has the commission been given to ravage and to slaughter by open violence; others are taught more insidious, though no less certain arts of destruction; and some appear to be created chiefly for the purpose of quickly clearing the earth of all decomposing animal or vegetable materials, which might otherwise have filled the air with noxious exhalations and contaminated the sources of vitality.*

This new law of animal existence must necessarily introduce new conditions of organization and of functions. Structures adapted to rapid locomotion must be supplied for the

* As specially appointed for the performance of this useful task may be cited, among the larger beasts of prey, the hyena, the jackal, the crow, and the vulture: among marine animals, the crustacea, and numerous mollusca; and among the lower orders, innumerable tribes of insects, such as ants, flesh flies, &c.