

of which he is deprived. Let man, however, examine, analyse, and contemplate himself, and he will soon discover the dignity of his being; he will perceive the existence of his soul; he will cease to degrade his nature; he will see, at one glance, the infinite distance placed by the Supreme Being between him and the brutes.

God alone knows the past, the present, and the future. Man, whose existence continues but a few moments, perceives only these moments: But a living and immortal power compares these moments, distinguishes and arranges them. It is by this power that man knows the present, judges of the past, and foresees the future. Deprive him of this divine light, and you deface and obscure his being; nothing will remain but an animal equally ignorant of the past and the future, and affectable only by present objects.

## OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

MAN changes the natural condition of animals, by forcing them to obey and to serve him. A domestic animal is a slave destined to the amusement, or to aid the operations of men. The abuses to which he is too frequently subjected, joined to the unnatural mode of his living, induce great alterations both in his manners and dispositions. But a savage animal, obedient to Nature alone, knows no laws but those of appetite and independence. Thus the history of savage animals is limited to a small number of facts, the results of pure Nature. But the history of domestic animals is complicated, and warped with every thing relative to the arts employed in taming and subduing the native wildness of their tempers: And, as we are ignorant what influence habit, restraint, and example, may have in changing the manners, determinations, movements, and inclinations of animals, it is the duty of the naturalist to examine them with care, and to distinguish those facts which depend solely on instinct, from those that originate from education; to ascertain what is proper to them from what is borrowed; to separate artifice from Nature; and never to con-

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found the animal with the slave, the beast of burden with the creature of God.

Man holds a legitimate dominion over the brute animals, which no revolution can destroy. It is the dominion of mind over matter; a right of Nature founded upon unalterable laws, a gift of the Almighty, by which man is enabled at all times to perceive the dignity of his being: For his power is not derived from his being the most perfect, the strongest, or the most dexterous of all animals. If he hold only the first rank in the order of animals, the inferior tribes would unite, and dispute his title to sovereignty. But man reigns and commands from the superiority of his nature: He thinks; and therefore he is master of all beings who are not endowed with this inestimable talent. Material bodies are likewise subject to his power: To his will they can oppose only a gross resistance, or an obstinate inflexibility, which his hand is always able to overcome, by making them act against each other. He is master of the vegetable tribes, which, by his industry, he can, at pleasure, augment or diminish, multiply or destroy. He reigns over the animal creation; because, like them, he is not only endowed with sentiment and the power of motion, but because he thinks, distinguishes ends and means, directs his actions, concert his operations, overcomes force by ingenuity, and swiftness by perseverance.

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Among animals, however, some are more soft and gentle, others more savage and ferocious. When we compare the docility and submissive temper of the dog with the fierceness and rapacity of the tiger, the one appears to be the friend, and the other the enemy of man. Thus his empire over the animals is not absolute. Many species elude his power, by the rapidity of their flight, by the swiftness of their course, by the obscurity of their retreats, by the element which they inhabit: Others escape him by the minuteness of their bodies; and others, instead of acknowledging their sovereign, attack him with open hostility. He is likewise insulted with the stings of insects, and the poisonous bites of serpents; and he is often incommoded with impure and useless creatures, which seem to exist for no other purpose but to form the shade between good and evil, and to make man feel how little, since his fall, he is respected.

But the empire of God must be distinguished from the limited dominion of man. God, the creator of all being, is the sole governor of Nature. Man has no influence on the universe, the motions of the heavenly bodies, or the revolutions of the globe which he inhabits. He has no general dominion over animals, vegetables, or minerals. His power extends not to species, but is limited to individuals; for species and the great body of matter belong to, or rather constitute Nature. Every thing moves on, perishes,

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or is renewed, by an irresistible power. Man himself, hurried along by the torrent of time, cannot prolong his existence. Connected, by means of his body, to matter, he is forced to submit to the universal law, and, like all other organized beings, he is born, grows, and perishes.

But the ray of divinity with which man is animated, ennobles and animates him above every material existence. This spiritual substance, so far from being subject to matter, is entitled to govern it; and though the mind cannot command the whole of Nature, she rules over individual beings. God, the source of all light and of all intelligence, governs the universe, and every species, with infinite power: Man, who possesses only a ray of this intelligence, enjoys, accordingly, a power limited to individuals, and to small portions of matter.

It is, therefore, apparent, that man has been enabled to subdue the animal creation, not by force, or the other qualities of matter, but by the powers of his mind. In the first ages of the world, all animals were equally independent. Man, after he became criminal and savage, was not in a condition to tame them. Before he could distinguish, choose, and reduce animals to a domestic state, before he could instruct and command them, he behoved to be civilized himself; and the empire over the animals, like all other empires, could not be established previous to the institution of society.

Man

Man derives all his power from society, which matures his reason, exercises his genius, and unites his force. Before the formation of society, man was perhaps the most savage and the least formidable of all animals. Naked, without shelter, and destitute of arms, the earth was to him only a vast desert peopled with monsters, of which he often became the prey: And, even long after this period, history informs us, that the first heroes were only destroyers of wild beasts.

But, when the human species multiplied and spread over the earth, and when, by means of society and the arts, man was enabled to conquer the universe, he made the wild beasts gradually retire; he purged the earth of those gigantic animals, whose enormous bones are still to be found; he destroyed, or reduced to a small number, the voracious and hurtful species; he opposed one animal to another; and, subduing some by address, and others by force, and attacking all by reason and art, he acquired to himself perfect security, and established an empire, which knows no other limits than inaccessible solitudes, burning sands, frozen mountains, or dark caverns, which serve as retreats to a few species of ferocious animals.