CHAPTER II.

SURVEY OF THE CREATION FROM NATURAL HISTORY.

Previously to our entering directly on the subject before us, it will probably be found not wholly unworthy of attention to recollect, in how different a way the multiplication of the human species has ordinarily been regarded, by writers whose purpose it was to survey the various classes of existence that form the subject of natural history, and who were satisfied to discover "the wisdom of God in the works of creation," from the ideas expressed by Mr. Malthus. The following is the manner in which the subject is stated by Goldsmith, one of the latest of the number, in his History of the Earth and Animated Nature.

"We may observe, that that generation is the most complete, in which the fewest animals are produced: Nature, by attending to the production of one at a time, seems to exert all her efforts in bringing it to perfection: but, where this attention is divided, the animals so produced come into the world with partial advantages. In this manner twins are never, at least while infants, so large or strong as those that come singly into the world; each having, in some measure, robbed the other of its right; as that support which Nature meant for one, has been prodigally divided.
"In this manner, as those animals are the best that are produced singly, so we find that the noblest animals are ever the least fruitful. These are seen usually to bring forth but one at a time, and to place all their attention upon that alone. On the other hand, all the oviparous kinds produce in amazing plenty; and even the lower tribes of the viviparous animals increase in a seeming proportion to their minuteness and imperfection. Nature seems lavish of life in the lower orders of creation; and, as if she meant them entirely for the use of the nobler races, she appears to have bestowed greater pains in multiplying the number, than in completing this kind. In this manner, while the elephant and the horse bring forth but one at a time, the spider and the beetle are seen to produce a thousand: and even among the smaller quadrupeds, all the inferior kinds are extremely fertile; any one of these being found, in a very few months, to become the parent of a numerous progeny.

"In this manner therefore the smallest animals multiply in the greatest proportion; and we have reason to thank Providence, that the most formidable animals are the least fruitful. Had the lion and the tiger the same degree of fecundity with the rabbit or the rat, all the arts of man would be unable to oppose these fierce invaders, and we should soon perceive them be. come the tyrants of those who claim the lordship of the creation. But Heaven, in this respect, has wisely consulted the advantage of all. It has opposed to man only such enemies, as he has art and strength to conquer; and, as large animals require proportional supplies, nature was unwilling to give new life, where it in some measure denied the necessary means of subsistence.

"In consequence of this pre-established order, the animals that are endowed with the most perfect methods of generation, and bring forth but one at a time, seldom begin to procreate, till they have almost acquired their full growth. On the other hand, those which bring forth many, engender before they have arrived at half their natural size. The horse and the bull come almost to perfection before they begin to generate; the hog and the rabbit scarcely leave the teat before they become parents themselves. In whatever light therefore we consider this subject, we shall find that all creatures approach most to perfection, whose generation most nearly resembles that of man. The reptile produced from cutting, is but one degree above the vegetable. The animal produced from the egg, is a step higher in the scale of
existence: that class of animals which are brought forth alive, are still more exalted. Of these, such as bring forth one at a time are the most complete; and foremost of these stands man, the great master of all, who seems to have united the perfections of all the rest in his formation.

**Footnotes**


**Chronology:**

- **November 30, 1819:** Book 1, Chapter 02 -- Publication.
- **March 20, 2019:** Book 1, Chapter 02 -- Last Updated on http://www.RevoltLib.com.

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