

the following, given by Darwin. In Paraguay, there are no wild oxen and horses, as in the neighbouring parts of South America, both north and south of Paraguay. This surprising circumstance is explained simply by the fact that in that country a kind of small fly is very frequent, and is in the habit of laying its eggs in the navel of newly born calves and foals. The newly born animals die in consequence of this attack, and the small deadly fly is therefore the cause of oxen and horses never becoming wild in that district. Supposing that this fly were destroyed by some insect-eating bird, then these large mammals would grow wild in Paraguay, as well as in the neighbouring parts of South America; and as they would eat a quantity of certain species of plants, the whole flora, and, consequently again, the whole fauna of the country would become changed. It is hardly necessary to state, that at the same time the whole economy, and consequently the character, of the human population would alter. It is much the same with the Tse-tse fly in Africa.

Thus the prosperity, nay, even the existence of whole populations can be indirectly determined by a single small animal or vegetable form in itself extremely insignificant. There are small coral islands whose human inhabitants live almost entirely upon the fruit of a species of palm. The fructification of this palm is principally effected by insects, which carry the pollen from the male to the female palm trees. The existence of these useful insects is endangered by insect-eating birds, which in their turn are pursued by birds of prey. The birds of prey, however, often succumb to the attack of a small parasitical mite, which develops itself in millions in their feathers. This small, dangerous