

dations calculated to join in a general chain, the links of the most distant beings, we should seize these singular relations as they offer themselves to our view. The armadillos, instead of hair, are covered, like turtles, crawfish, &c. with a solid crust. The manis is armed with scales like fish; the porcupine carries a sort of prickly feathers, the quill of which is like that of the birds. Thus in the class of quadrupeds, and in the most constant characteristic of these animals, that of being covered with hairs, Nature varies in bringing them near the three different classes of birds, fishes, and the crustaceous kinds. We must be cautious then in judging of the nature of beings by one single character, as that would always lead us into error; even two or three characters, though general, are often insufficient, and it is only, as we have often repeated, by the union of all the attributes, and by enumerating all the characters, that we can judge of the essential qualities of the productions of nature. A good description without definitions, an exposition more exact on the differences than the analogies, a particular attention to exceptions and almost imperceptible gradations, are the true rules, and I dare assert, the only means of estimating nature. If the time lost in forming definitions had been employed