

themselves. We see no example in all the multi-form combinations of chemistry and mechanics, however aided by various and variously blended physical influences, of any half-formed mechanism of this sort passing onward to its completion, but arrested in its progress and thrown back again, because of some deficient sense or organ that is essential to vitality. The argument represents nature as teeming with abortions, whereas in the whole compass of nature, no such abortion, and not even the tendency to it has been found.

9. But our second reply we hold to be still more satisfactory. There can be conceived many thousands of mal-adjustments, each of which would be incompatible with comfort and not incompatible with life—yet none of which we ever see realized. The argument of the atheists presupposes of every adaptation in the animal frame, which we plead in proof of design, that it is essential to vitality—but it is not so. The nails, for example at the extremities of our fingers, and the position of which we ascribe to collocation but they to the blind direction of a physical law—may be conceived to have been otherwise situated, without any such hazard to the life of man as would have led to the extinction of the race. They might have been ranged in separate horny excrescences round the wrist, instead of being ranged as now at the places where they are most serviceable. In like manner the teeth might have been less conveniently posited than they are actually—or the cutting and grinding teeth might have changed places, instead of being fixed and arranged in the very way that makes