

“How easy,” says this fanciful writer, “is it to conceive the change of a winged fish, flying at times through the water, at times through the air, into a bird flying always through the air!” It is a law of nature, that the chain of being,

are as amusing as those of a fairy tale, and quite as extreme. Take the following extract as an instance : —

“Winged or flying fish, stimulated by the desire of prey, or the fear of death, or pushed near the shore by the billows, have fallen among reeds or herbage, whence it was not possible for them to resume their flight to the sea, by means of which they had contracted their first facility of flying. Then their fins, being no longer bathed in the seawater, were split, and became warped by their dryness. While they found, among the reeds and herbage among which they fell, any aliments to support them, the vessels of their fins, being separated, were lengthened and clothed with beards, or, to speak more justly, the membranes, which before kept them adherent to each other, were metamorphosed. The beard formed of these warped membranes was lengthened. The skin of these animals was insensibly covered with a down of the same color with the skin, and this down gradually increased. The little wings they had under their belly, and which, like their wings, helped them to walk in the sea, became feet, and served them to walk on land. There were also other small changes in their figure. The beak and neck of some were lengthened, and those of others shortened. The conformity, however, of the first figure subsists in the whole, and it will be always easy to know it. Examine all the species of fowls, large and small, even those of the Indies, those which are tufted or not, those whose feathers are reversed, such as we see at Damietta — that is to say, whose plumage runs from the tail to the head — and you will find species of fish quite similar, scaly or without scales. All species of parrots, whose plumages are so different, the rarest and the most singular-marked birds, are, conformable to fact, painted like them with black, brown, gray, yellow, green, red, violet color, and those of gold and azure; and all this precisely in the same parts where the plumages of those birds are diversified in so curious a manner.” — *Tellamed*, p. 224, ed. 1750.