

fore may be selected as a fit term of comparison.

In considering the office of the adult spine, with a view to the present subject, we find that great strength, combined with great flexibility, is particularly requisite. With reference to strength, the pyramidal form of this natural column is obviously conducive to the purpose intended; and the arrangement of the solid matter, of which it is composed, is such as to contribute to the same effect; for that solid matter, instead of being collected into one compact mass, is diffused in such a manner as to resemble the structure of sponge; and it is well known, with reference to the strength of artificial columns, that, the same quantity of matter being given for each, and their height being the same, those columns which are hollow are stronger than those which are solid. Again, the whole column is made up of numerous parts, called *vertebræ*, which are so firmly bound together as to lessen the chance of being broken in the act of bending; and these *vertebræ* being applied to each other, throughout, by broad horizontal surfaces, are thus best calculated to support the perpendicular pressure of the superincumbent parts. The effect of general strength is further accomplished by the mutual locking in of the projecting portions, or processes, of the several *vertebræ*; and the same effect is accomplished to an