

without the aid of the same productions, we should be deprived of various substances which are now employed for clothing, and fuel, and the construction of our habitations. But the adaptation of the vegetable kingdom to the arts and conveniences of life is visible in numerous other instances: and the principal difficulty, in illustrating this point, is the selection of appropriate examples, and the order of their arrangement.

SECT. II.

The Cocoa-nut Tree, including the formation of Coral Reefs.

FOR the purpose of introducing in a more particular manner the general subject of this chapter, and as an impressive example of the important ends which nature often accomplishes by the simplest means, I propose to consider the mode in which the cocoa-nut tree is spontaneously propagated in the coral islands of the Indian Archipelago and elsewhere: nor will it be an undue anticipation of a subsequent department of this treatise, if I previously give a brief description of the process by which those islands have themselves been brought into existence. The account of their origin indeed belongs more strictly to the history of the animal than of the vegetable world; but the two subjects are so naturally connected, that it would be injudicious to separate them.

It may be collected from the observations of