

any such mode of conception, or upon any decision between such suppositions: since, for the purpose of our argument, the consequence of either view is the same. There is an adaptation somewhere or other, on either supposition. There is account taken of one part of the system in framing the other: and the mind which took such account can be no other than that of the Intelligent Author of the universe. When indeed we come to see the vast number, the variety, the extent, the interweaving, the reconciling of such adaptations, we shall readily allow, that all things are so moulded upon and locked into each other, connected by such subtilty and profundity of design, that we may well abandon the idle attempt to trace the *order* of thought in the mind of the Supreme Ordainer.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### *The Length of the Year.*

A YEAR is the most important and obvious of the periods which occur in the organic, and especially in the vegetable world. In this interval of time the cycle of most of the external influences which operate upon plants is completed. There is also in plants a cycle of internal functions, corresponding to this succession of external causes. The length of either of these periods might have been different from what it is, according to any grounds of necessity which we can perceive. But a certain length is selected in both instances, and in both instances the same. The length of the year is so determined as to be adapted to the constitution of most vegetables; or the construction of vegetables is so adjusted as to be suited to the length which the year really has, and unsuited to a duration longer or shorter by any