

been as strong and heavy as that of the horse or camel, it would have preponderated too much at the extremity of such a neck.

There is an accommodation also in the position of the spine. In most quadrupeds the spine lies horizontally. If it had been so placed in the giraffe, the whole weight of the shoulders, neck, and head would have been thrown on the anterior extremities. But from the shortness of the hind legs, and the oblique position of the trunk, the hind legs bear a portion of the weight of the neck and head, parts which, in other creatures, are sustained altogether by the fore legs.* When we look to the ribs, we see another peculiarity that may be accounted for on the same consideration of the length and consequent weight of the neck and head. The chest or thorax rests, of course, upon the anterior extremities: and we shall find that those ribs which bear the pressure are of great comparative strength, while the ribs posterior to these are singularly contrasted with them, by their delicacy and weakness, and by their mobility in breathing. In short, it appears that the fore part of the chest, which, in a manner, intervenes between the neck and the anterior extremities, requires its compages to be particularly firm and strong,

* The ligamentum nuchæ in this animal extends the whole length of the spine, from the os sacrum to the skull.