

of the deep, they are still, from the conformation of their respiratory organs, dependent on another element. If a seal, a porpoise, or a dolphin were confined, but for a short time, under the surface of the water, it would perish with the same certainty as any other of the mammalia, placed in the same situation. We observe them continually rising to the surface in order to breathe, under every circumstance of privation or of danger; and however eagerly they may pursue their prey, however closely they may be pressed by their enemies, a more urgent want compels them, from time to time, to respire air at the surface of the sea. Were it not for this imperious necessity, the Whale, whose enormous bulk is united with corresponding strength and swiftness, would live in undisturbed possession of the widely extended domains of the ocean, might view, without dismay, whole fleets sent out against him, and might defy all the efforts that man could practise for his capture or destruction. But the constitution of his blood, obliging him to breathe at the surface of the water, brings him within the reach of the fatal harpoon. In vain, on feeling himself wounded, does he plunge for refuge into the recesses of the deep; the same necessity recurs, and compelling him again to present himself to his foes, exposes him to their renewed attacks, till he falls in the unequal struggle. His colossal form and gigantic strength are of little avail against the power of man, feeble though that power may seem, when physically considered, but which derives resistless might from its association with an immeasurably superior intellect.