

and dazzling splendours, on the other vie with some of the Mammalians in magnitude and other characters. Here we have the humming-birds of America, scarcely bigger than the humble bee; and there the savage condour of the same country, whose outstretched wings would serve to measure the length of the giant elephant or rhinoceros. Though we cannot mount into the air ourselves, yet every one, from the peasant to the prince, that is able to follow the flight of the birds with his eyes, is delighted with the spectacle of life that they exhibit in the aërial regions, and we should scarcely miss the beasts of the earth and all the creatures that are moving in all directions and paces over its surface, more than we should the disappearance of the birds of every wing from the atmosphere. And therefore the prophet in his sublime description of the desolation of Judah, makes the disappearance of the birds of heaven the most striking feature of his picture. *I beheld the earth, says he, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light; I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled; and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.**

The wing of these animals, in many cases, so powerful to bear them on through the thin air, and counteract the gravity of their bodies; to take strong hold of that element which man cannot subdue like water, to move through himself, and so push themselves on, often with the swiftness of an arrow through its rushing winds or almost motionless breath: the wing of birds is, in fact, the foreleg or arm adapted and clothed by Supreme Intelligence, for the action it has to maintain, and for the medium in which that action is to take place, and consists of nearly the same parts as the fore-leg in Mammalians, for there is the shoulder, † fore-arm, ‡ and the

* Jerem. iv. 23—25.

† Humerus.

‡ Cubitus.