

ceptions to this rule : but viewing the whole of animated beings, it seems to be a law of nature. Thus plants, and perhaps the very lowest kinds of animals, have the power of assimilating carbonic acid gas : the powers of assimilation of plants, and of such animals, may also extend to other inorganic compounds of carbon—indeed plants and zoophytes appear to derive their chief nourishment from matters of that nature. Higher in the zoological scale, we find that animals almost invariably prey on those inferior to themselves, either in magnitude, in organization, or in intelligence ; till we arrive at man himself. He, as his necessities, or as his fancies may dictate, appropriates every nourishing substance, even carbonic acid gas ; which the human stomach seems to have the capacity of assimilating, in common, probably, with the stomachs of all animals. Of course a lion, or even a crab, can feed on the body of a man, as well as on that of an ox or of an insect. But no one, we presume, will assert, that man is the natural prey or food of these animals ; and such alone is the degree of immunity, for which we here contend : in all the operations of nature, we must try to discover and bear in mind, not the exception, but the rule ; otherwise we shall be constantly liable to error.

By this beautiful arrangement in the mode of their nutrition, the more perfect animals are exonerated from the toil of the initial assimila-