

Thirdly. The gradual developement of the staminal principles of animal bodies, by repeated organizing processes, fully accords with those general views of the operations of nature, which, throughout this work, we have endeavoured to illustrate; and which lead to the general conclusion, that the operations of nature are never abrupt, but always slow and gradual. Further, it is more reasonable to conceive, that matters already assimilated to the animal body, are better fitted for its immediate uses; than matters which, like the chyle, have only received an imperfect assimilation.

Fourthly. Many animals can and do live, for a considerable time, on substances contained in their own bodies. Thus, hybernating animals, as previously stated, have the ability to assimilate further, those matters which have already become part of themselves; consequently, such a faculty of progressive organization as we have supposed, actually exists; and *a sort of digestion is carried on in all parts of the body, to fit for absorption and future appropriation, those matters which have been already assimilated.* Were it necessary, other arguments to the same effect might be added: but we shall at present delay the further consideration of the assimilating character of the whole absorbent system; that we may recur to it again, in a succeeding part of the present chapter.