

to our imagination, and seem to be inseparable attributes of those beings: yet Nature, as if willing to deviate from this characteristic uniformity, and to elude our views, offers herself, contrary to our general ideas, and in contradiction to our denominations and characters, and amazes more by her exceptions than by her laws. Quadrupeds, which we look upon as the first class of living nature, and who are, next to man, the most remarkable beings of this world, are neither superior in every thing, nor separated by constant attributes from all other animals. The first of those characters which constitutes their name, and which consists in having four feet, is common to lizards, frogs, &c. which differ, however, from quadrupeds in so many other respects, as to make them be considered as a separate class. The second general property, to produce young alive, is not peculiar to quadrupeds, since it is also common with cetaceous animals. And the third attribute, which seems the less equivocal, as it is the most apparent, that of being covered with hair, exists not in several species which cannot be excluded from the class of quadrupeds, since this single characteristic excepted, they are like them in all other respects: and, as these exceptions of nature are but gradations