

it, or raise their heads out of it in order to respire.

But these great advantages are counterbalanced by imperfections still greater. The seal may be said to be deprived of the use of his limbs, as his arms, thighs, and legs are almost entirely shut up within his body, while nothing appears without but his hands and feet, which are, it is true, furnished with five fingers or toes, but which are scarcely moveable, being united by a strong membrane, so that they might more properly be called fins than hands and feet, being more adapted for the purpose of swimming than walking. Besides the hind feet are turned backwards, therefore entirely useless upon land, so that when the animal is obliged to move, he drags himself forward like a reptile, and with efforts much more painful, for as he cannot bend himself in an arch, like the serpent, to obtain the support of different parts, and so advance by the reaction of the ground, he would remain like a lump on the earth if it were not for his hands and tail, and with which he seizes any thing within his reach with such dexterity that he drags himself up the steepest shores, rocks, and even shoals of ice, however steep or slippery.

By