

Thus, we have a general idea of a bird ; but this idea does not correspond to any particular bird, or any particular character of a bird. It is not precisely an ostrich, an owl, a hen, or a sparrow ; it is not because it has wings, or feathers, or two legs ; or because it has the power of flight, or builds nests. Any, or all, of these characters would not fully represent our idea of a bird ; and yet every one has a distinct ideal notion of a bird, a fish, a quadruped, &c. It is common, however, to speak of the animal which embodies most fully the characters of a group, as the type of that group. Thus we might, perhaps, regard an eagle as the type of a bird, the duck as the type of a swimming-bird, and the mallard as the type of a duck, and so on.

As we must necessarily make frequent allusions to animals, with reference to their systematic arrangement, it seems requisite to give a sketch of their classification in as popular terms as may be, before entering fully upon that subject, and with particular reference to the diagram fronting the title-page.

The Animal Kingdom consists of four great divisions, which we call DEPARTMENTS, namely :

- I. The department of Vertebrates.
- II. The department of Articulates.
- III. The department of Mollusks.
- IV. The department of Radiates.

I. The department of VERTEBRATES includes all animals which have an internal skeleton, with a back-bone for its axis. It is divided into four classes :

1. Mammals, (animals which nurse their young.)
2. Birds.