

## SECT. III.

*Physical Superiority of Man, on what Principle to be estimated.*

FROM this helplessness in his early years, and from the occasional inferiority of some of his physical organs to the corresponding organs of brutes, it has sometimes been absurdly asked what claim man has, from his physical structure or powers, to be placed first in the scale of animal beings. His strength, what is it to that of the elephant or of the horse, or even of some species of reptiles or fish? his powers of sight and motion, what are they to those of the bird? his sense of odours, to that of the dog? his touch, to that of the spider?

And yet, even if we entirely omit the consideration of the soul, that immaterial and immortal principle which is for a time united to his body, and view him only in his merely animal character, man is still the most excellent of animals. How confined are the powers of other animals, considered generally, when compared with those of the human species. The comb of the bee indeed is in its construction wonderful; and so is even the nest of the bird, or the habitation of the beaver: but these animals could never be taught to fabricate, or to use, the simplest of those machines or instruments, which man, even in a very partially civilized state, is