

CHAP. IX.

Adaptation of Animals to the Physical Condition of Man.

SECT. I.

General Observations on the Animal Kingdom.

THE same remark may be made with regard to the general utility of animals, which has been made in the case of vegetables: for we have sufficient reason for believing, that, among the myriads of species of animals which exist upon the face of the earth, there is not one which does not act an important part in the economy of nature¹. And yet, if it be correctly stated that out of about a hundred thousand species of animals, the number supposed to have been hitherto discovered, eighty thousand are of the class of insects^m; it will be evident that the mass of mankind is ignorant of the very existence of nearly four fifths of the whole animal kingdom: for, with the exception of the fly, the

¹ It is the opinion of Mr. Scoresby, (*Account of the Arctic Regions*, vol. i. p. 179, 180.) that the olive-green colour of the water, observable in many parts of the Greenland sea, is owing to the presence of numberless quantities of very small medusæ and other minute animals. "These small animals," he says, "apparently afford nourishment to the sepixæ, actinixæ, and other mollusca which constitute the food of the whale: thus producing a dependent chain of animal life, one particular link of which being destroyed, the whole must necessarily perish."

^m The number is probably greater.