

rate, as to leave no doubt of the identity of those described by Aristotle with those to which the description is applicable at the present day °.

SECT. IV.

*On those Animal Forms called Monsters, or Lusus Naturæ.*

THE subject of the present section is naturally connected with that of the latter part of the preceding: and, although the occasion neither requires nor would justify even a brief examination of the laws which regulate the formation of monsters, or *lusus naturæ*, as they are often called, especially as they have been lately illustrated by that ardent French physiologist Geoffroy St.

° It can hardly escape observation, or fail to excite surprise, that in the work now under consideration, Aristotle usually contents himself with stating facts: he very rarely reasons on their final causes; thus omitting what Cuvier calls one of the most beautiful and useful points in natural history. The following are, I believe, the only instances in which he deviates from mere description. He observes, when speaking of fish, that a great proportion of the spawn of those animals is destroyed in various ways; and that if this were not the case the species would become too numerous. (Τὰ μὲν πολλὰ φὰ οἱ ἄρρενες ἀνακάπτουσι, τὰ δ' ἀπόλλυται ἐν τῷ ὑγρῷ· ὅσα δ' ἂν ἐκτέκωσιν εἰς τοὺς τόπους εἰς οὓς ἐκτίκτουσι, ταῦτα σώζεται· εἰ γὰρ πάντα ἐσώζετο, παμπληθὲς ἂν τὸ γένος ἦν ἐκάστων. p. 169.) On another occasion he observes, that though the spring is the general season for propagation, yet occasionally the rule is set aside; where, for instance, the preservation of the offspring is the result. (Ὁρμητικώτατα μὲν οὖν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πᾶν εἰπεῖν πρὸς τὴν ὀχέϊαν τὴν ἐαρινὴν ὥραν ἐστίν· οὐ μὴν τὰ πάντα γε ποιεῖται τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν τῆς ὀχέϊας, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν ἐκτροφὴν τῶν τέκνων ἐν τοῖς καθήκουσι καιροῖς. p. 181.)