

Hilaire; it will not be perhaps considered impertinent to make a few observations on those remarkable productions, considered with respect to one of the probable final causes of their existence.

The term *lusus naturæ* is applied to those natural productions, which vary in any remarkable degree, with respect to form, colour, structure, size, &c. from the general character of the individuals of the same species. The term literally taken, implies a sportive effort of the creative power of Nature; and for the purpose of general description there is no objection to this term, being, as it now is, familiarized by long continued use. But as we have no ground for supposing that nature, or, to use the more proper expression, that the providence of the Creator ever acts without some wise and beneficent purpose, we must consider the term in a philosophical point of view, as expressing an effect, of the natural cause of which we are ignorant.

What, then, is the real character of those unusual productions which are denominated *lusus naturæ*, or *monsters*; or, in other words, for what end has Providence ordained that such productions should be formed and subjected to our observation? And here, as has been observed in another part of this treatise, it will be found, upon even a cursory examination, that in a *lusus naturæ* the character of the species, however