



CHAPTER III.

The Comparative Anatomy of the Hand.

IN this enquiry, we have before us what in the strictest sense of the word is a system. All the individuals of the extensive division of the animal kingdom which we have to review, possess a cranium for the protection of the brain,—a heart, implying a peculiar circulation,—five distinguishable organs of sense ; but the grand peculiarity, whence the term vertebrata is derived, is to be found in the spine ; that chain of bones which connects the head and body, and, like a keel, serves as a foundation for the ribs, or as the basis of that fabric which is for respiration.

I have said, that we are to confine ourselves to a portion only of this combined structure ; to separate and examine the anterior extremity, and to observe the adaptation of its parts, through the whole range of these animals. We