

CHAPTER II.

THE FUNCTIONS OF LIFE.

THE intentions of the Deity in the creation of the animal kingdom, as far as we are competent to discern or comprehend them, are referrible to the following classes of objects. The first relates to the individual welfare of the animal, embracing the whole sphere of its sensitive existence, and the means of maintaining the vitality upon which that existence is dependent. The second comprises the provisions which have been made for repairing the chasms resulting, in the present circumstances of the globe, from the continual destruction of life, by ensuring the multiplication of the species, and the continuity of the race to which each animal belongs. The third includes all those arrangements which have been resorted to, in order to accommodate the system to the consequences that follow from an indefinite increase in the numbers of each species. The fourth class relates to that systematic economy in the plans of organization by which all the former objects are most effectually secured. I shall offer some observations on each of these general heads of inquiry.

With reference to the welfare of the individual animal, it is evident that in the brute creation; the great end to be answered is the attainment of sensitive enjoyment. To this all the arrangements of the system, and all the energies of its vital powers must ultimately tend. Of what value would be mere vegetative life to the being in whom it resides, unless it were accompanied by the faculty of sensation, and unless the sensations thence arising were attended with pleasure? It is only by reasoning analogically from the feelings: