

a system of pipes called *Arteries*, and receives it back again by means of another set of tubes called *Veins*. In the third place it is necessary that the circulating blood should continually undergo purification by the chemical action of oxygen: a purpose which is answered by the function of *Respiration*. The fourth stage of nutrition relates to the more immediate application of this purified material to the wants of the system, to the extension of the organs, to the reparation of their losses, and to the restoration of their exhausted powers.

Life, then, consists of a continued series of actions and reactions, ever varying, yet constantly tending to definite ends. Most of the parts of which the body consists undergo continual and progressive changes in their dimensions, figure, arrangement, and composition. The materials which have been united together and fashioned into the several organs, are themselves successively removed and replaced by others, which again are, in their turn, discarded, and new materials substituted, though without any perceptible change of external form. Perpetual mutation appears to constitute the fundamental law of living nature; and it has been farther decreed by the power which gave the first impulse of animation to this organized fabric, that its movements and its powers shall be limited in their duration, and that, even when they are not destroyed by extraneous causes, after continuing for a certain period, they shall come to a close. The law of Mortality, to which all the beings that have received the gift of life are subjected, is a necessary consequence of the law of mutation; and the same causes that originally effected the development and growth of the system, and maintained it in the vigour of its maturity, by continuing to operate, are certain to lead to the demolition of the fabric they had raised, and to the exhaustion and final extinction of its powers. The individual dies; but it is only to give place to other beings, alike in nature and in form, equally partaking of the blessings of existence, and destined, after having, in their turn, given rise to a new race of suc-