

cessors, to run through the same perpetual cycle of changes and renovations.

Thus the continuance and multiplication of each species may be assigned as the second of the great ends which are to be accomplished in the system of living nature. A portion of the vital power of the parent is for this purpose employed to give origin and birth to the offspring. The process itself, by which the germs of living beings originate, is veiled in the most impenetrable mystery. But we are permitted to trace many of the subsequent steps in the gradual development both of vegetable and animal organizations; and certainly no part of the economy of animated nature is more calculated to impress us with exalted ideas of the immensity of the scheme of Providence, and the vigilant care with which the most distant consequences have been anticipated, than the history of the early periods of their existence. Nothing can be more admirable than the progressive architecture of the frame; nothing more beautiful than the setting up of temporary structures, which are required only at an early stage of growth, and which are afterwards removed to give place to more permanent and finished organs.

The utmost solicitude has been shown in every part of living nature to secure the perpetuity of the race, by the establishment of laws, of which the operation is certain in all contingent circumstances. It has also been manifestly the object of various provisions to diffuse the races as widely as possible over a great surface of the habitable globe.

We are next to advert to the important consequences which, in the animal kingdom more especially, flow from this law of indefinite production. As animals are ultimately dependent on the vegetable kingdom for the materials of their subsistence, and as the quantity of these materials is, in a state of nature, necessarily limited by the extent of surface over which vegetation is spread, a time must arrive when the number of animals thus continually increasing is exactly such as the amount of food produced by the earth will maintain. When this limit has been attained, no farther in-