

ter in its immediate vicinity. It is exposed to the action of the surrounding elements, and affected by their vicissitudes, without the means of retreat, and without the power of reaction. With respect to all external agents, indeed, vegetables may be regarded as passive beings. Very different are the condition and destination of animals. Excepting a few among the lower orders of the creation, such as Zoophytes and Mollusca, all animals are gifted with the power of spontaneously changing their situation, according to their several wants and necessities, and are thus enabled to seek and to choose those objects which are salutary, and to avoid or reject those which are injurious. Nature has, for these purposes, furnished them with a more complex organization, and more varied powers, adapted to a greater diversity of pursuits, and to a higher and more expanded sphere of existence.

The power of progressive motion is enjoyed in very different degrees by different races of animals, according to the particular model on which they are constructed, and the relations which their organization bears to the element assigned as their residence. All the mechanical circumstances in their economy, indeed, are so closely linked together, as scarcely to admit of being considered separately. Thus, we find, in one animal, a variety of mechanical effects accomplished by one and the same instrument; while, in others they are each produced by a separate and distinct organ. In some, the leading principle of the construction is simplicity; in others, the most elaborate mechanism is displayed. But the means have constant reference to the design, and are ever varied in exact conformity with the change of purpose. The relative advantages of each plan of structure appear to have been carefully estimated, and studiously balanced. Each quality has been bestowed in different degrees of perfection; so, that in following the series of gradation among the successive tribes of animals, we occasionally meet with favoured species, endowed with great superiority in some particular faculty. Some animals excel in swiftness; others in strength. Some are qualified to dive into the recesses of the deep; others to flutter in the light regions of air; while,