

“Still, however, an immense variety of existences is diffused over the most cultivated spots: the earth, the water, and the air, teem with life. And in contemplating this exuberance of nature, indolence might naturally be tempted to pronounce that absolutely indeterminable, which cannot be particularized without so much application. But the active and inquisitive mind, instead of reposing in hopeless ignorance, or in a very limited degree of knowledge, has contrived means of numbering, grouping and classing all the various animals that people creation.

“Among those systematic naturalists whose indefatigable exertions have contributed to our knowledge, or to the facility of acquiring it, none have gained such deserved reputation as ARISTOTLE, RAY, KLEIN, LINNÆUS, and PENNANT. Why cannot we particularize BUFFON too, the philosophic painter of nature? He indeed rejected the trammels of system, as useless incumbrances, while he indulged in hypotheses as more congenial to his exuberant fancy; but his works on natural history will delight and improve, while the charms of language are capable of affecting the mind, and while diligent investigation deserves praise. His theories will amuse, while the solidity of his remarks instructs.

“That illustrious father of science, Linnæus, whose eye pervaded animal and vegetable nature to their most secret recesses, with a studied brevity of expression, and an unrivalled precision, comprehends the greatest variety in the narrowest limits; and hence gives the clearest views, with the least burden to the memory. According to this great naturalist the internal structure furnishes the first grand distinction of animals. Thus he finds, that quadrupeds and birds have two ventricles to the heart, and bot