

of birds, by bringing forth their young alive; like us, they are placed above the class of fishes, by breathing through their lungs; like us, they are placed above the class of insects, by having red blood circulating through their veins; and, lastly, like us, they are different from almost all the other classes of animated nature, being either wholly or partly covered with hair. Thus nearly are we represented in point of conformation to the class of animals immediately below us; and this shows what little reason we have to be proud of our persons alone, to the perfection of which quadrupeds make such very near approaches.

Quadrupeds, although they are thus strongly marked, and in general divided from the various kinds around them, yet some of them are often of so equivocal a nature, that it has been asserted, it is hard to tell whether they ought to be ranked in the quadruped class, or degraded to those below them. If, for instance, we were to marshal the whole group of animals around man, placing the most perfect next him, and those most equivocal near the classes they most approach, we should, it is said, find it difficult, after the principal had taken their stations near him, where to place many that lie at the out-skirts of this phalanx. The bat makes a near approach to the aerial tribe, and might, by some, be reckoned among the birds. The porcupine has also some pretensions to that class, being covered with quills, and showing that birds are not the only part of nature that are fur-