

most happily for the animal's ease, passes into hair; whilst on the contrary, that hair, in the dogs of the polar regions, is turned into wool, or something very like it: to which may be referred, what naturalists have remarked, that bears, wolves, foxes, hares, which do not take the water, have the fur much thicker upon the back than the belly; whereas, in the beaver, it is thicker upon the belly, as are the feathers in water-fowl. We know the final cause of all this, and we know no other.

The covering of birds cannot escape the most vulgar observation. Its lightness, its smoothness, its warmth, the disposition of the feathers all backward, the down about their stem, the overlapping of their tips, their different configuration in different parts, not to mention their variety of colours, constitute a vestment for the body, so beautiful, and so appropriate to the life which this animal is to lead, as that, I think, we should have had no conception of any thing equally perfect, if we had never seen it, nor can now imagine any thing more so. Let us suppose (what is possible only in supposition) a person who had never seen a bird, to be presented with a plucked pheasant, and bid to set his wits to work how to contrive for it a covering, which shall unite the qualities of warmth, lightness, and the least resistance to the air, and the highest degree of each; giving it also as much of beauty and of ornament as he could afford: he is the person to behold the work of the Deity, in this part of his creation, with the sentiments which are due to it. In the small order of birds which winter with us, from a snipe downwards, let the external colour of the feathers be what it will, their Creator has universally given them a bed of black down next their bodies. Black, we know, is the warmest colour; and the purpose here is to keep in the