be attained is dependent upon certain definite conditions, excluding the possibility of modification, that these conditions are uniformly and strictly adhered to. But wherever that absolute necessity does not exist, and there is afforded scope for deviation, there we are certain to find introduced all those modifications which the occasion admits of. Not only is this tendency to variety exemplified in the general appearance and form of the body, but it also prevails in each individual organ, however minute and insignificant that organ may seem. Even when the purpose to be answered is identical, the means which are employed are infinitely diversified in different instances, as if a design had existed of displaying to the astonished eyes of mortals the unbounded resources of creative power. While the elements of structure are the same, there is presented to us in succession every possible combination of organs, as if it had been the object to exhaust all the admissible permutations in the order of their union.

Some wise purpose, though dimly perceptible to our imperfect understandings, is no doubt answered by this great law of organic formation, the *law of variety*. That it is not blindly or indiscriminately followed, is apparent from its being circumscribed within certain limits, and controlled by another law, which we have next to consider—that of *conformity to a definite type*.

The most superficial survey of nature is sufficient to show that there prevail certain general resemblances among great multitudes of species, which lead us to class them into more or less comprehensive groups. Thus in the animal kingdom, quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, shell-fish, and insects, compose natural assemblages or classes, and each of these is readily divisible into subordinate groups or families. Now it results from a closer examination of the structure and economy of plants and animals, that the formation of all the individual species comprehended in the same class, has been conducted in conformity with a certain ideal model, or *type*, as it is called. Of this general type all the existing forms appear as so many separate copies, differing, indeed, as to