

influence of climate on the character of the vegetation could hardly have escaped their observation.

Antecedently to investigation, there was no reason for presuming that the vegetable productions, growing wild in the eastern hemisphere, should be unlike those of the western, in the same latitude; nor that the plants of the Cape of Good Hope should be unlike those of the south of Europe; situations where the climate is little dissimilar. The contrary supposition would have seemed more probable, and we might have anticipated an almost perfect identity in the animals and plants which inhabit corresponding parallels of latitude. The discovery, therefore, that each separate region of the globe, both of the land and water, is occupied by distinct groups of species, and that most of the exceptions to this general rule may be referred to disseminating causes now in operation, is eminently calculated to excite curiosity, and to stimulate us to seek some hypothesis respecting the first introduction of species which may be reconcileable with such phenomena.

Botanical geography. — A comparison of the *plants* of different regions of the globe affords results more to be depended upon in the present state of our knowledge than those relating to the animal kingdom, because the science of botany is more advanced, and probably comprehends a great proportion of the total number of the vegetable productions of the whole earth. Humboldt, in several eloquent passages of his Personal Narrative, was among the first to promulgate philosophical views on this subject. Every hemisphere, says this traveller, produces plants of different species; and it is not by the diversity of climates that we can attempt to explain why equinoctial Africa has no Laurineæ, and the New World no Heaths; why the Calceolariæ are found only in the southern hemisphere; why the birds of the continent of India glow with colours less splendid than the birds of the hot parts of America: finally, why the tiger is peculiar to Asia, and the ornithorhynchus to New Holland.*

“We can conceive,” he adds, “that a small number of the families of plants, for instance, the Musaceæ and the Palms, cannot belong to very cold regions, on account of their internal structure and the importance of certain organs; but we cannot explain why no one of the family of Melastomas vegetates north of the parallel of thirty degrees; or why no rose-tree belongs to the southern hemisphere. Analogy of climates is often found in the two continents without identity of productions.”†

The luminous essay of De Candolle on “Botanical Geography” presents us with the fruits of his own researches and those of Humboldt, Brown, and other eminent botanists, so arranged, that the principal phenomena of the distribution of plants are exhibited in connexion with the causes to which they are chiefly referrible.‡ “It might not, perhaps, be difficult,” observes this writer, “to find

* Pers. Nar., vol. v. p. 180.

† Ibid.

‡ Essai Élémentaire de Géographie

Botanique. Extrait du 18me vol. du
Dict. des Sci. Nat.