

across the seas, is evident from the following most interesting account of the arrival of one at the island of St. Vincent. It is worthy of being recorded, says Mr. Guilding, "that a noble specimen of the *Boa constrictor* was lately conveyed to us by the currents, twisted round the trunk of a large sound cedar tree, which had probably been washed out of the bank by the floods of some great South American river, while its huge folds hung on the branches, as it waited for its prey. The monster was fortunately destroyed after killing a few sheep, and his skeleton now hangs before me in my study, putting me in mind how much reason I might have had to fear in my future rambles through the forests of St. Vincent, had this formidable reptile been a pregnant female, and escaped to a safe retreat." \*

## CHAPTER XL.

### LAWS WHICH REGULATE THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIES—*continued.*

Geographical distribution and migrations of Fish — of Testacea — of Zoophytes — Distribution of Insects — Migratory instincts of some species — Certain types characterize particular countries — Their means of dissemination — Geographical distribution and diffusion of man — Speculations as to the birth-place of the human species — Progress of human population — Drifting of canoes to vast distances — On the involuntary influence of man in extending the range of many other species.

#### *Geographical Distribution and Migrations of Fish.*

ALTHOUGH we are less acquainted with the habitations of marine animals than with the grouping of the terrestrial species before described, yet it is well ascertained that their distribution is governed by the same general laws. The testimony borne by MM. Péron and Lesueur to this important fact is remarkably strong. These eminent naturalists, after collecting and describing many thousand species of marine animals which they brought to Europe from the southern hemisphere, insist most emphatically on their distinctness from those north of the equator; and this remark they extend to animals of all classes, from those of a more simple to those of a more complex organization — from the Sponges and Medusæ to the Cetacea. "Among all those which we have been able to examine," say they, "with our own eyes, or with regard to which it has appeared to us possible to pronounce with certainty, there is not a single animal of the southern regions which is not distinguished by essential characters from the analogous species in the northern seas." †

On comparing the freshwater fish of Europe and North America,

\* Zool. Journ. vol. iii. p. 406. Dec. 1827. Marins. — Ann. du Mus., tom. xv., cited by Prichard, Phys. Hist. of Mankind,

† Sur les Habitations des Animaux vol. i. p. 51.