

the results obtained during their expedition are recorded by our author in his *Fragments Asiaticques*, and in his *Asie Centrale*, and by Rose in his *Reise nach dem Oural*. If the *Asie Centrale* had been his only work, constituting, as it does, an epitome of all the knowledge acquired by himself and by former travelers on the physical geography of Northern and Central Asia, that work alone would have sufficed to form a reputation of the highest order.

I proceed to offer a few remarks on the work of which I now present a new translation to the English public, a work intended by its author "to embrace a summary of physical knowledge, as connected with a delineation of the material universe."

The idea of such a physical description of the universe had, it appears, been present to his mind from a very early epoch. It was a work which he felt he must accomplish, and he devoted almost a lifetime to the accumulation of materials for it. For almost half a century it had occupied his thoughts; and at length, in the evening of life, he felt himself rich enough in the accumulation of thought, travel, reading, and experimental research, to reduce into form and reality the undefined vision that has so long floated before him. The work, when completed, will form three volumes. The *first* volume comprises a sketch of all that is at present known of the physical phenomena of the universe; the *second* comprehends two distinct parts, the first of which treats of the incitements to the study of nature, afforded in descriptive poetry, landscape painting, and the cultivation of exotic plants; while the second and larger part enters into the consideration of the different epochs in the progress of discovery and of the corresponding stages of advance in human civilization. The *third* volume, the publication of which, as M. Humboldt himself informs me in a letter addressed to my learned friend and publisher, Mr. H. G. Bohn, "has been somewhat delayed, owing to the present state of public affairs, will comprise the special and scientific development of the great Picture of Na-