

impressions, loses all distinctness of form, like some distant mountain shrouded from view by a veil of mist, is clearly revealed by the light of mind, which, by its scrutiny into the causes of phenomena, learns to resolve and analyze their different elements, assigning to each its individual character. Thus, in the sphere of natural investigation, as in poetry and painting, the delineation of that which appeals most strongly to the imagination, derives its collective interest from the vivid truthfulness with which the individual features are portrayed.

The regions of the torrid zone not only give rise to the most powerful impressions by their organic richness and their abundant fertility, but they likewise afford the inestimable advantage of revealing to man, by the uniformity of the variations of the atmosphere and the development of vital forces, and by the contrasts of climate and vegetation exhibited at different elevations, the invariability of the laws that regulate the course of the heavenly bodies, reflected, as it were, in terrestrial phenomena. Let us dwell, then, for a few moments, on the proofs of this regularity, which is such that it may be submitted to numerical calculation and computation.

In the burning plains that rise but little above the level of the sea, reign the families of the banana, the cycas, and the palm, of which the number of species comprised in the flora of tropical regions has been so wonderfully increased in the present day by the zeal of botanical travelers. To these groups succeed, in the Alpine valleys, and the humid and shaded clefts on the slopes of the Cordilleras, the tree-ferns, whose thick cylindrical trunks and delicate lace-like foliage stand out in bold relief against the azure of the sky, and the cinchona, from which we derive the febrifuge bark. The medicinal strength of this bark is said to increase in proportion to the degree of moisture imparted to the foliage of the tree by the light mists which form the upper surface of the clouds resting over the plains. Every where around, the confines of the forest are encircled by broad bands of social plants, as the delicate aralia, the thibaudia, and the myrtle-leaved Andromeda, while the Alpine rose, the magnificent befaria, weaves a purple girdle round the spiry peaks. In the cold regions of the Paramos, which is continually exposed to the fury of storms and winds, we find that flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants, bearing large and variegated blossoms, have given place to monocotyledons, whose slender spikes constitute the sole covering of the soil. This is the zone of the