

the equatorial axis exceeds the polar axis of the globe, and shows us the mean equality of the flattening of the two hemispheres, without entailing on us the necessity of giving the detail of the measurement of the degrees in the meridian, or the observations on the pendulum, which have led us to know that the true figure of our globe is not exactly that of a regular ellipsoid of revolution, and that this irregularity is reflected in the corresponding irregularity of the movements of the moon.

The views of comparative geography have been specially enlarged by that admirable work, *Erkunde im Verhältniss zur Natur und zur Geschichte*, in which Carl Ritter so ably delineates the physiognomy of our globe, and shows the influence of its external configuration on the physical phenomena on its surface, on the migrations, laws, and manners of nations, and on all the principal historical events enacted upon the face of the earth.

France possesses an immortal work, *L'Exposition du Système du Monde*, in which the author has combined the results of the highest astronomical and mathematical labors, and presented them to his readers free from all processes of demonstration. The structure of the heavens is here reduced to the simple solution of a great problem in mechanics; yet Laplace's work has never yet been accused of incompleteness and want of profundity.

The distinction between dissimilar subjects, and the separation of the general from the special, are not only conducive to the attainment of perspicuity in the composition of a physical history of the universe, but are also the means by which a character of greater elevation may be imparted to the study of nature. By the suppression of all unnecessary detail, the great masses are better seen, and the reasoning faculty is enabled to grasp all that might otherwise escape the limited range of the senses.

The exposition of general results has, it must be owned, been singularly facilitated by the happy revolution experienced since the close of the last century, in the condition of all the special sciences, more particularly of geology, chemistry, and descriptive natural history. In proportion as laws admit of more general application, and as sciences mutually enrich each other, and by their extension become connected together in more numerous and more intimate relations, the development of general truths may be given with conciseness devoid of superficiality. On being first examined, all phenomena appear to be