

the power exercised by the imagination over the domain of the senses. In like manner, from the height occupied by the physical history of the world, all parts of the horizon will not appear equally clear and well defined. This indistinctness will not, however, be wholly owing to the present imperfect state of some of the sciences, but in part, likewise, to the unskillfulness of the guide who has imprudently ventured to ascend these lofty summits.

The object of this introductory notice is not, however, solely to draw attention to the importance and greatness of the physical history of the universe, for in the present day these are too well understood to be contested, but likewise to prove how, without detriment to the stability of special studies, we may be enabled to generalize our ideas by concentrating them in one common focus, and thus arrive at a point of view from which all the organisms and forces of nature may be seen as one living, active whole, animated by one sole impulse. "Nature," as Schelling remarks in his poetic discourse on art, "is not an inert mass; and to him who can comprehend her vast sublimity, she reveals herself as the creative force of the universe—before all time, eternal, ever active, she calls to life all things, whether perishable or imperishable."

By uniting, under one point of view, both the phenomena of our own globe and those presented in the regions of space, we embrace the limits of the science of the *Cosmos*, and convert the physical history of the globe into the physical history of the universe, the one term being modeled upon that of the other. This science of the *Cosmos* is not, however, to be regarded as a mere encyclopedic aggregation of the most important and general results that have been collected together from special branches of knowledge. These results are nothing more than the materials for a vast edifice, and their combination can not constitute the physical history of the world, whose exalted part it is to show the simultaneous action and the connecting links of the forces which pervade the universe. The distribution of organic types in different climates and at different elevations—that is to say, the geography of plants and animals—differs as widely from botany and descriptive zoology as geology does from mineralogy, properly so called. The physical history of the universe must not, therefore, be confounded with the *Encyclopedias of the Natural Sciences*, as they have hitherto been compiled, and whose title is as vague as their limits are ill defined. In the work before us, partial facts will be considered only in relation to the whole