

The higher the point of view, the greater is the necessity for a systematic mode of treating the subject in language at once animated and picturesque.

But thought and language have ever been most intimately allied. If language, by its originality of structure and its native richness, can, in its delineations, interpret thought with grace and clearness, and if, by its happy flexibility, it can paint with vivid truthfulness the objects of the external world, it reacts at the same time upon thought, and animates it, as it were, with the breath of life. It is this mutual reaction which makes words more than mere signs and forms of thought ; and the beneficent influence of a language is most strikingly manifested on its native soil, where it has sprung spontaneously from the minds of the people, whose character it embodies. Proud of a country that seeks to concentrate her strength in intellectual unity, the writer recalls with delight the advantages he has enjoyed in being permitted to express his thoughts in his native language ; and truly happy is he who, in attempting to give a lucid exposition of the great phenomena of the universe, is able to draw from the depths of a language, which, through the free exercise of thought, and by the effusions of creative fancy, has for centuries past exercised so powerful an influence over the destinies of man.

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LIMITS AND METHOD OF EXPOSITION OF THE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION  
OF THE UNIVERSE.

I HAVE endeavored, in the preceding part of my work, to explain and illustrate, by various examples, how the enjoyments presented by the aspect of nature, varying as they do in the sources from whence they flow, may be multiplied and ennobled by an acquaintance with the connection of phenomena and the laws by which they are regulated. It remains, then, for me to examine the spirit of the method in which the exposition of the *physical description of the universe* should be conducted, and to indicate the limits of this science in accordance with the views I have acquired in the course of my studies and travels in various parts of the earth. I trust I may flatter myself with a hope that a treatise of this nature will justify the title I have ventured to adopt for my work, and exonerate me from the reproach of a presumption that would be doubly reprehensible in a scientific discussion.

Before entering upon the delineation of the partial phenom-