

plains each organic form attains the maximum of its development. Considerations of this nature, by their tendency to generalization, impress a nobler character on the physical description of the globe, and enable us to understand how the aspect of the scenery, that is to say, the impression produced upon the mind by the physiognomy of the vegetation, depends upon the local distribution, the number, and the luxuriance of growth of the vegetable forms predominating in the general mass. The catalogues of organized beings, to which was formerly given the pompous title of *Systems of Nature*, present us with an admirably connected arrangement by analogies of structure, either in the perfected development of these beings, or in the different phases which, in accordance with the views of a spiral evolution, affect in vegetables the leaves, bracts, calyx, corolla, and fructifying organs; and in animals, with more or less symmetrical regularity, the cellular and fibrous tissues, and their perfect or but obscurely developed articulations. But these pretended systems of nature, however ingenious their mode of classification may be, do not show us organic beings as they are distributed in groups throughout our planet, according to their different relations of latitude and elevation above the level of the sea, and to climatic influences, which are owing to general and often very remote causes. The ultimate aim of physical geography is, however, as we have already said, to recognize unity in the vast diversity of phenomena, and by the exercise of thought and the combination of observations, to discern the constancy of phenomena in the midst of apparent changes. In the exposition of the terrestrial portion of the Cosmos, it will occasionally be necessary to descend to very special facts; but this will only be in order to recall the connection existing between the actual distribution of organic beings over the globe, and the laws of the ideal classification by natural families, analogy of internal organization, and progressive evolution.

It follows from these discussions on the limits of the various sciences, and more particularly from the distinction which must necessarily be made between descriptive botany (morphology of vegetables) and the geography of plants, that in the physical history of the globe, the innumerable multitude of organized bodies which embellish creation are considered rather according to *zones of habitation* or *stations*, and to differently inflected *isothermal bands*, than with reference to the principles of gradation in the development of internal organism. Notwithstanding this, botany and zoology, which constitute