

die of the seventeenth century. He was the first to distinguish between *general and special geography*, the former of which he subdivides into an *absolute*, or, properly speaking, *terrestrial* part, and a *relative or planetary* portion, according to the mode of considering our planet either with reference to its surface in its different zones, or to its relations to the sun and moon. It redounds to the glory of Varenus that his work on *General and Comparative Geography* should in so high a degree have arrested the attention of Newton. The imperfect state of many of the auxiliary sciences from which this writer was obliged to draw his materials prevented his work from corresponding to the greatness of the design, and it was reserved for the present age, and for my own country, to see the delineation of comparative geography, drawn in its full extent, and in all its relations with the history of man, by the skillful hand of Carl Ritter.*

The enumeration of the most important results of the astronomical and physical sciences which in the history of the Cosmos radiate toward one common focus, may perhaps, to a certain degree, justify the designation I have given to my work, and, considered within the circumscribed limits I have proposed to myself, the undertaking may be esteemed less adventurous than the title. The introduction of new terms, especially with reference to the general results of a science which

though the experiments on the pendulum by Richer had been made nine years prior to the appearance of the Cambridge edition. Newton's *Principia Mathematica Philosophiæ Naturalis* were not communicated in manuscript to the Royal Society until April, 1686. Much uncertainty seems to prevail regarding the birth-place of Varenus. Jæcher says it was England, while, according to *La Biographie Universelle* (b. xlvii., p. 495), he is stated to have been born at Amsterdam; but it would appear, from the dedicatory address to the burgomaster of that city (see his *Geographia Comparativa*), that both suppositions are false. Varenus expressly says that he had sought refuge in Amsterdam, "because his native city had been burned and completely destroyed during a long war," words which appear to apply to the north of Germany, and to the devastations of the Thirty Years' War. In his dedication of another work, *Descriptio regni Japoniæ* (Amst., 1649), to the Senate of Hamburgh, Varenus says that he prosecuted his elementary mathematical studies in the gymnasium of that city. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that this admirable geographer was a native of Germany, and was probably born at Luneburg (*Witten. Mem. Theol.*, 1685, p. 2142; Zedler, *Universal Lexicon*, vol. xlvi., 1745, p. 187).

* Carl Ritter's *Erdkunde im Verhältniss zur Natur und zur Geschichte des Menschen, oder allgemeine vergleichende Geographie* (Geography in relation to Nature and the History of Man, or general Comparative Geography).