

painters, and thus heightening their powers of artistic creation.

I would here be permitted to refer to some remarks which I published nearly half a century ago in a treatise which has been but little read, entitled *Ideen zu einer Physiognomik der Gewächse*,* and which stands in the most intimate connection with the subject under consideration. He who comprehends nature at a single glance, and knows how to abstract his mind from local phenomena, will easily perceive how organic force and the abundance of vital development increase with the increase of warmth from the poles to the equator. This charming luxuriance of nature increases, in a lesser degree, from the north of Europe to the lovely shores of the Mediterranean than from the Iberian Peninsula, Southern Italy, and Greece, toward the tropics. The naked earth is covered with an unequally woven, flowery mantle, thicker where the sun rises high in a sky of deep azure, or is only veiled by light and feathery clouds, and thinner toward the gloomy north, where the returning frost too soon blights the opening bud or destroys the ripening fruit. While, in the cold zones, the bark of the trees is covered with dry moss or with lichens, the region of palms and of feathery arborescent ferns shows the trunks of Anacardia and of the gigantic species of Ficus embellished by Cymbidia and the fragrant Vanilla. The fresh green of the Dracontium, and the deeply-serrated leaves of the Pothos, contrast with the variegated blossoms of the Orchideæ, while climbing Bauhinia, Passiflora, and yellow-blossomed Banisteria, entwining the stems of forest trees, spread far and high in air, and delicate flowers are unfolded from the roots of the Theobroma, and from the thick and rough bark of the Crescentia and the Gustavia. In the midst of this abundance of flowers and leaves, and this luxuriantly wild entanglement of climbing plants, it is often difficult for the naturalist to discover to which stem different flowers and leaves belong; nay, one single tree adorned with Paullinia, Bignonia, and Dendrobia, presents a mass of vegetable forms which, if disentangled, would cover a considerable space of ground.

Each portion of the earth has, however, its peculiar and

* Humboldt, *Ansichten der Natur*, 2te Ausgabe, 1826, bd. i., s. 7, 16, 21, 36, and 42. Compare, also, two very instructive memoirs, Friedrich von Martius, *Physiognomie des Pflanzenreiches in Brasilien*, 1824, and M. von Olfers, *allgemeine Uebersicht von Brasilien*, in Feldner's *Reisen*, 1828, th. i., s. 18-23.