tribution of plants led him to the following remarkable assertion in his excellent "Physical Description of the Canary Islands":—

"The individuals of genera, on continents, spread and widely diffuse themselves, and owing to the difference of localities, nourishment, and soil, form varieties; and in consequence of their isolation never being crossed by other varieties, and so brought back to the main type, they in the end become a permanent and a distinct species. Then, perhaps, in other ways, they meet with other descendants of the original form—which have likewise become new varieties—and both now appear as very distinct species, no longer mingling with one another. Not so on islands. Being commonly confined in narrow valleys or within the limit of small zones, individuals can reach one another and destroy every commencing production of a permanent variety. Much in the same way the peculiarities or faults in language, originating with the head of some family, become, through the extension of the family, indigenous throughout a whole district. If the district is separated and isolated, and if the language is not brought back to its former purity by constant connection with that spoken in neighbouring districts, a dialect will be the result. If natural obstacles, forests, constitution, form of government, unite the inhabitants of the separate district still more closely, and separate them still more completely from their neighbours, the dialect is fixed, and becomes a completely distinct language" ("Uebersicht der Flora auf den Canarien," S. 133).

We perceive that Buch is here led to the fundamental idea of the Theory of Descent by the phenomena of the