

Let us now, starting from this comprehensive point of view, survey a biological domain, the varied and complicated phenomena of which may be explained with remarkable simplicity and clearness by the theory of descent. I mean *Chorology*, or the theory of the *local distribution of organisms over the surface of the earth*. By this I do not only mean the *geographical* distribution of animal and vegetable species over the different parts and provinces of the earth, over continents and islands, seas, and rivers, but also their *topographical* distribution in a *vertical* direction, their ascending to the heights of mountains, and their descending into the depths of the ocean.

The strange chorological series of phenomena which show the horizontal distribution of organisms over parts of the earth, and their vertical distribution in heights and depths, have long since excited general interest. In recent times Alexander Humboldt⁸⁹ and Frederick Schouw have especially discussed the geography of plants, and Berghaus, Schmarda, and Wallace the geography of animals, on a large scale. But although these and several other naturalists have in many ways increased our knowledge of the distribution of animal and vegetable forms, and laid open to us a new domain of science, full of wonderful and interesting phenomena, yet Chorology as a whole remained, as far as their labours were concerned, only a desultory knowledge of a mass of individual *facts*. It could not be called a science as long as the *causes* for the explanation of these facts were wanting. These causes were first disclosed by the theory of selection and its doctrine of the *migrations* of animal and vegetable species, and it is only since Darwin that we have been able to speak of an independent *science*