He may be called the morphologist of nature on the largest scale: the representation of the grand aspect of things as exhibited in his 'Cosmos,' and in his earlier 'Ansichten der Natur,' was the leading idea of his life and work. Through him and his friend Karl Ritter "comparative geography received a treatment worthy of the subject, showing its connection with the history of the human race and the advancement of civilisation, inasmuch as the configuration of the earth is proved to have been an important element in the dispersion of nations." [1]

But morphology, or the study of forms and structures, has to be carried on not only on the large, the gigantic scale, as by Humboldt; it is quite as important, and has probably been even more influential, when directed towards the minute, the imperceptibly small, which ordinarily quite escapes our notice. If

by various specialists of Humboldt's labours in the sciences of astronomy, geology, geography, the distribution of animal and plant life, meteorology, and other provinces of research, some of which largely owe their existence to his initiative. The study written by Ewald on his geological work, and that of Griesbach, on what is termed in German animal and plant geography, are specially interesting. Unfortunately this most fascinating volume has not been brought out in the English edition. As illustrating the comprehensiveness of Humboldt's view it is well to note how, before beginning to put together his materials in the great tableau which the 'Kosmos' was intended to be, he drew two entirely different pictures of nature on our globe; first in the large work on the New Continent ('Voyage aux Régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent,' in six parts, published in Paris, 1805 to 1834), and then from an entirely opposite aspect in his works on Central Asia ('Asie Centrale: Recherches sur les Chaînes et Montagnes et la Climatologie comparée,' 3 vols., Paris, 1843). "To Humboldt the importance of the Asiatic expedition consisted in its elevating him above the one-sided effect of having contemplated nature exclusively in the New World, and leading him, so to speak, to feel experimentally that the earth, in common with every other object, is possessed of opposite sides" ('Life of Humboldt,' vol. ii. p. 212).

[1] See 'Kosmos,' vol. i. p. 60 (German edition, 1845).