

It was the opinion of Linnæus that all animals and plants had their commencement in a particular region of the earth, from whence they migrated into all other parts of its surface. And had no new facts come to light since his day, to change the aspect of the subject, one would hesitate long before adopting views opposed to so distinguished a naturalist. But new facts, in vast numbers, have been multiplying ever since his day, and zoologists and botanists now almost universally adopt the opinion, early promulgated by Dr. Prichard, in his admirable work on the Physical History of Man, that there must have been several centres of creation, for which the animals and plants radiated only so far as the climate and food were adapted to their natures, except a few species endowed with the power of accommodating themselves to all climates. Certain it is that they are now thus distributed; and it is inevitable death for most species to venture beyond certain limits. If tropical animals and plants, for instance, were to migrate to the temperate zones, and especially to the frigid regions, they could not long survive; and almost equally fatal would it be for the animals and plants of high latitudes to take up their abode near the equator. But even within the tropics we find distinct species of animals and plants on opposite continents. Indeed, naturalists reckon a large number of botanical and zoological districts, or provinces, as they are called, within which they find certain peculiar groups of animals and plants, with natures exactly adapted to that particular district, but incapable of enduring the different climate of adjoining districts. They differ considerably as to the number of these districts, because the plants and animals of our globe are by no means yet fully described, and because the districts assigned to the different classes do not fully coincide; but as to the existence of such a distribution, they are of one opinion. The most reliable divisions of this kind make twenty-five botanical provinces, and five kingdoms and fourteen provinces among animals.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that man, and some of the domesticated animals, and a few plants, are found in almost every climate, has, until recently, blinded the eyes of naturalists to the manner in which the great mass of animals and plants are confined within certain prescribed limits. But so soon as the general fact is

<sup>1</sup> Johnston's Physical Atlas, pp. 66, 76, (Philadelphia edition, 1850.)