

clear and connected code of such laws, we may refer to one law, at least, which appears to be of genuine authority and validity; and which is worthy our attention as an example of a properly organical or physiological principle, distinct from all mechanical, chemical, or other physical forces; and such as cannot even be conceived to be resolvable into those. I speak of the tendency which produces such results as have been brought together in recent speculations upon *Morphology*.

It may perhaps be regarded as indicating how peculiar are the principles of organic life, and how far removed from any mere mechanical action, that the leading idea in these speculations was first strongly and effectively apprehended, not by a laborious experimenter and reasoner, but by a man of singularly brilliant and creative fancy; not by a mathematician or chemist, but by a poet. And we may add further, that this poet had already shown himself incapable of rightly apprehending the relation of physical facts to their principles; and had, in trying his powers on such subjects, exhibited a signal instance of the ineffectual and perverse operation of the method of philosophizing to which the constitution of his mind led him. The person of whom we speak, is John Wolfgang Göthe, who is held, by the unanimous voice of Europe, to have been one of the greatest poets of our own, or of any time, and whose *Doctrine of Colors* we have already had to describe, in the History of Optics, as an entire failure. Yet his views on the laws which connect the forms of plants into one simple system, have been generally accepted and followed up. We might almost be led to think that this writer's poetical endowments had contributed to this scientific discovery;—the love of beauty of form, by fixing the attention upon the symmetry of plants; and the creative habit of thought, by making constant development of a familiar process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We may quote some of the poet's own verses as an illustration of his feelings on this subject. They are addressed to a lady.

Dich verwirret, geliebte, die tausendfältige Mischung  
 Dieses blumengewühls über dem garten umher;  
 Viele namen hörest du an, und immer verdränget,  
 Mit barbarischem klang, einer den andern im ohr.  
 Alle gestalten sind ählich und keine gleichet der andern;  
 Und so deutet das chor auf ein geheimes gesetz,  
 Auf ein heiliges räthsel. O! könnte ich dich, liebliche freundinn,  
 Ueberliefern so gleich glücklich das lösende wort.