

comparison of the types belonging to our planet, in its present condition, with those now found only in a fossil state, so abundant in the immense space lying between the shores opposite to northern Europe and northern Asia. The geographical distribution of organic forms in curves of equal density of occupation represents in great degree the inflexions of the isothermal lines. . . . I am charged by the king, who knows the value of your older works, and who still feels for you the affectionate regard which he formerly expressed in person, to request that you will place his name at the head of your long list of subscribers. He wishes that an excursion across the Atlantic valley may one day bring you, who have so courageously braved Alpine summits, to the historic hill of Sans Souci. . . .

Something of Agassiz's astonishment and pleasure at the encouragement given to his projected work is told in his letters. To his old friend Professor Valenciennes, in Paris, he writes: "I have just had an evidence of what one may do here in the interest of science. Some six months ago I formed a plan for the publication of my researches in America, and determined to carry it out with all