

With the general geographical distribution of land and ocean, we take it for granted, that all are more or less acquainted. We shall, therefore, confine our remarks chiefly, to their relative proportions; which are such, that nearly three-fourths of the earth's surface may be said to be covered with water; while barely one-fourth, of course, must be occupied by dry land. Of this dry land, as is well known, by far the greater part is confined to the northern hemisphere; while in the southern hemisphere, the Pacific ocean exhibits a nearly continuous surface of water, greater than that of the whole dry land of the globe put together. According to the estimate of Humboldt, the dry land in the two hemispheres, is in the ratio of three to one; between the tropics, in the two hemispheres, as five to four; and without the tropics, as thirteen to one; the preponderance being in the northern hemisphere.

The height of the dry land above the general level of the ocean is very various; but its utmost height, as compared with the diameter of the earth, is quite trifling; and it has been shown, that if the whole of the dry land existing, were equally distributed over the bottom of the sea, the quantity of water in the sea is amply sufficient to cover it entirely. Hence, "dry land can be only considered as so much of the rough surface of our globe, as may happen for the time,