that the temperate and northern parts **of** Europe produce no peculiar species, that is, no species which do not occur equally, if not more abundantly, in the southern districts of the continent, where we likewise find several kinds native to the neighbouring countries of Asia and Africa. Limits, however, may be assigned to several species, and this cir­cumstance naturally gives rise to some curious observations. The common viper, for example, inhabits all the central parts of Europe, and is even spread over temperate Asia as far as Lake Baikal. It is well known in Sweden, spreads westwards into Britain, is frequent in Jura, Islay, and some others of our western islands, but is unknown in Ireland. The western boundary, however, of the great mass of indi­viduals of this species may be stated to he the river Seine, while the Alps appear to form its southern limit.@@’ In the southern portion of western Europe our viper is replaced by another species called the aspic ( *Vipera aspis),* which spreads from Trieste over Italy into Sicily, through Swit­zerland and over France, passing beyond the Seine towards the Pyrenees, and probably into Spain. The southern parts of the east of Europe produce a third species of this genus, *Vipera ammodytes,* which we find to spread from Styria as far as the south of Hungary, and into Greece, Dalmatia, Sicily, and probably likewise Calabria. This distribution of so nearly-allied species seems modified by, if not de­pendent on, the nature of the territories which each inha­bits. The first prefers, in general, heathy lands and places of a rather moist and wooded character, the second affects a dry and arid country, while the third rejoices in a rocky re­gion. No local or climatic varieties of these vipers have been yet observed ; but it is otherwise with several other snakes, which have a widely extended distribution over Eu­rope ; for example, *Coronella lævis,* and *Tropidonotus na­trix* and *viperinus.* These species, of which the former two inhabit almost the whole of northern and central Europe, the last not extending further than the fiftieth degree of north latitude, occur equally in the south of Europe, where they form well-marked local varieties. Thus, in Spain, *Trop. viperinus* has the back longitudinally rayed ; and a corre­sponding character occurs in Sardinia in relation to a spe­cies common in that island, while the Sicilian individuals present some slight additional disparities, *Coronella lævis forms* in Italy a peculiar climatic variety, of a paler hue than usual, which extends as far north as Marseilles, *co­luber Æseulapii,* which inhabits the south of Germany, is also found in Dalmatia, Italy, and Provence, *col. viridi- flavus* has been observed over all the south of Europe, Greece, Hungary, Dalmatia, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, and as far north as France and Switzerland, *col. hippocrepis oc­curs* in Spain and Sardinia, while *col. leopardinus* is a na­tive of Sicily, Dalmatia, and Greece ; but, so far as known, neither of these kinds is met with in Italy. Neither has *Psammophis lacerrina,* so common in Dalmatia, in Spain, and a large portion of France, been ever found either in Italy or the adjacent islands. The southern countries of Europe produce several serpents which are not characte­rized by a great extent of distribution. Such are *Xenodon Michahellis* of Spain, and *Psammophis Dahlii* of Dalmatia (the latter, however, which approaches the tree-serpents in its slenderly elongated form, being found also in Greece), and *Torrrix eryx,* confined to Greece as a European spe­cies, but elsewhere well known amid African and Asiatic deserts.

A careful and more extended study of the distribution of animal life in Africa would be found to illustrate many curious relations both in descriptive zoology and physical geography. No other continent furnishes more striking proofs of the connection between the natural characters of

a country and its animal inhabitants. Thus, after acquir­ing some knowledge of the physical constitution of Africa, we might almost predicate the prevailing features of its na­tural history. The leading character of this continent is the presence of vast sandy plains or deserts, and elevated plateaus, of which the vegetation is either entirely extin­guished, or held by a precarious tenure. Acted upon con­tinually by a burning sun, the flat unvaried surface is alto­gether unfit for the production of those vapours which, in a state of atmospheric condensation, produce our refreshing showers of frequent moisture, and the more stormy acces­sories of hail and snow. The great mountain ranges being few and far between, the intermediate regions possess no perennial fountains of refreshing water, no “ clouds of morn­ing dew,” to clothe their arid wastes with verdure. Hence the absence of that mighty power which in America slum­bers amid the most unpeopled wilderness, and makes, when aided by the hand of man, the “ desert blossom as the rose.” It results from the fact of so large a portion of Africa being destitute of rivers, and consequently of forests and other lowlier vegetation, that we there find but a small number of those animals which inhabit woods and fresh waters, while such as are fitted to scour over vast plains occur in great abundance. Hence the absence of stags and the ex­istence of vast troops of antelopes ; hence also the scarcity of squirrels and other wood-haunting Rodentia, and the in­crease of certain swift-footed terrestrial kinds. The cha­racters of reptile life exhibit an equal conformity with the spi­rit of these observations. Africa produces perhaps a greater number of land-tortoises than all other portions of the world combined ; but the fresh-water kinds, with the exception of a single *Emys,* and one or two species of the genus *Triοnyx,* are nearly unknown, while frogs and toads are also few in number. The same observation applies in reference both to the aquatic serpents and the wood-loving kinds. The genera *Dryophis* and *Homalopsis* are entirely want­ing, and not more than one or two species are known of each of the genera *Bipsas, Dendrophis,* and *Tropidonotus.* In so vast a continent, however, in spite of its prevailing character of aridity, there must be numerous exceptions ; and we know how far-flowing are the waters of the Nile and the Niger, how lofty and continuous the mighty moun­tains of Abyssinia. Many an umbrageous river, we doubt not, still rolls its crystal waters directly towards the all-ab­sorbing sea, or fills up the glassy depth of unimagined lakes, whose beautiful shores are haunted by many unknown forms of existence,—

Fair creatures, to whom Heaven A calm and sinless life, with love, hath givcn.

Our knowledge of African snakes, however, is still insuf­ficient to admit of any accurate geographical sketch of their distribution being laid before our readers, for we have no data on which to assign limits to the majority even of the best-known species. Egypt and Abyssinia, Algiers, a part of Senegambia, the coast of Guinea, and the Cape,— these are the chief points from which any precise know­ledge has been derived. Yet we may hazard the asser­tion, that Africa in general is much poorer in reptiles, particularly serpents, than either Asia or America. The number of genera is equally circumscribed ; and the same observation applies to our present class as has been made in relation both to the higher animals and plants of Africa, to wit, that the species of certain genera are very numerous, and that several different kinds often inhabit the same places. Towards the southern extremity of the continent we meet with four species of the genus *Cοronella,* as many of the genus *Hoja,* and three *Vipers.* The other genera which

@@@, It is indeed alleged to have been met with, though sparingly, in the valley of the Po, and as far as the Florentine territory.