

Continental Distribution of Flora and Fauna.



UCH a broad subject as this cannot, of course, be treated in detail within the limits of an essay. I must, therefore, confine myself to general remarks upon the characteristics of the different continents. To simplify the work I shall treat totally, first, the flora, secondly, the fauna.

Our own continent, North America, is indeed favored by nature, yet its flora possess few characteristics to distinguish it from correspondring regions of Europe and Asia. In the north and along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts there are vast forest regions—pine, cedar, spruce, in the north and east; pine, fir, and cypress in the west. The hardy cereals of the north-central plains give way to maize and fruit trees as one goes south. In the dry, arid regions of the south-west grows the cactus, indigenous and peculiar to America.

Asia and Europe may be considered together, as they are remarkable for the similarity of their flora. A great number of useful plants are indigenous to those parts of Europe and Asia bordering on the Mediterranean. Here we find the cork-cak, box, cherry, peach and date trees, berries of many kinds and aromatic herbs. Eastern Asia grows its tea and rice. Southern Asia is resplendent in a tropical vegetation of mangroves, palms, bayan fig trees, bamboos, all hung with festoons of vine. Valuable trees, such as teak, sandal-wood, ebony, gutta-percha, are also found here. Trees are, in fact, a source of great revenue for this region, spices, dyes, gums and resins being derived from them. Tropical fruits and vegetables are also abundant.

Africa presents a variety of regions. North Africa, bordering on the Mediterranean, is similar, in its flora, to Europe. Equatorial Africa displays tropical magnificence though woods alternate with grassy, treeless, plains. The region contains a great variety of palms, including the doom, date, deleb and wine palm, while the massive baobab, the grotesque pandanus and the tamarind are characteristic. The dry, elevated plateau of South Africa is remarkable for the gorgeous hues of its flowers. The flowering plants of this region number hundreds of species of heaths, proteas, gladiolus and geraniums. Corresponding to the