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The physical atlas

Johnston, Alexander Keith

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Preface.

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P R E F A C E.

IN this ATLAS it has been attempted to present in a graphic form, a concise yet comprehensive view of the PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE GLOBE, embracing under that term its superficial structure, the movements of its oceanic and aerial currents, and the distribution of organized existence on its surface.

The importance and utility of this most interesting branch of knowledge, and the absence in this country of the necessary aids for its study, induced the Editor to undertake the supply of a felt desideratum by the production of a series of Maps and other illustrations of Natural Phenomena, considered in their mutual relations and dependencies, on a scale worthy of the subject, and which, with descriptive letter-press, should be in keeping with the rapid progress and marked development in every other branch of science at the present day. In pursuance of this design, the Editor visited the principal geographical establishments on the Continent of Europe in 1842, and on that occasion entered into copy-right arrangements with Professor Berghaus of Potsdam for the publication of a certain portion of his celebrated PHYSIKALISCHER ATLAS. Four sheets of that work, greatly extended and improved, were appended to the "NATIONAL ATLAS" in 1843.

These were announced as specimens of a larger work to be immediately proceeded with, should such be demanded; and encouraged by the flattering manner in which they were received, and urged by solicitations for their continuance from many of the most influential scientific men of this and other countries, the Editor was induced to commence the construction of a complete PHYSICAL ATLAS. The five intervening years have been devoted, unremittingly, to the elaboration of materials previously collected, and to researches necessary for their due arrangement. Of the thirty Maps comprised in the Work, fifteen were designed by Professor Berghaus, and are now produced on an enlarged scale, with many additions. For the construction of the others the Editor is alone responsible; for although some of them were suggested by the Maps of Professor Berghaus, they are so different in construction, in extent of scale, and in amount of matter, as to constitute them in reality original works. This will at once be seen by comparing the corresponding subjects in the German and English publications.

In the letter-press descriptions, the Editor has endeavoured to present a careful synopsis, from original sources, of every subject treated of in the Maps, and he ventures to hope that this department of his labours will be found to embody a complete digest of Physical Geography; but, in all cases, he has made constant reference to the best authorities for more extensive information.

The ATLAS is arranged under the following heads:—

GEOLOGY.

HYDROLOGY.

METEOROLOGY.

PHYTOLOGY AND ZOOLOGY.

Each division is adjusted and printed so as to be complete in itself, and, at the same time, a component part of the whole Work.

The Editor embraces this opportunity of expressing his deep obligations to the Baron Alexander von Humboldt, at whose suggestion the Work was undertaken, on whose researches a large portion of its contents has been based, and who has repeatedly, during its progress, honoured it with his approbation. He has also to offer his acknowledgments to those gentlemen who have enriched the Volume with the valuable contributions to which their names are appended, and to many other scientific and literary friends who have favoured him with encouragement and advice.

ALEXANDER KEITH JOHNSTON.

EDINBURGH, *April*, 1848.

