liarities in temperature, owing to the mixture of hot and cold currents of air; but in the main, isothermal lines, that is to say, lines drawn through places having the same mean temperature, would coincide with parallels of latitude. A glance at any isothermal chart, whether for the whole year, for summer, for winter, or for a single month, will show that this is far from being the case. The lines of equal temperature deviate everywhere, and often most widely, from their normal parallelism with the parallels of latitude and with each other. A glance at the same chart will also show, that while there is an attempt, as it were, on the part of the isothermal lines to maintain their normal direction through the centre of great continents, the most marked curves, indicating the widest extensions of uniform conditions of temperature, are where there is a wide stretch of open sea extending through many degrees of latitude, and consequently including very different climatal conditions.

The lands bordering upon the ocean partake in this general diffusion of heat and amelioration of climate, and hence we have the difference between continental and insular climates—the former giving extremes of summer heat and winter cold, and the latter a much more uniform temperature, somewhat below the normal temperature within the tropics, and usually greatly above it beyond their limits.

The islands of Ireland and Great Britain and the west coast of the Scandinavian peninsula are involved in the most extreme system of abnormal curves which we have in any of the ocean basins; and to this peculiarity in the distribution of tem-