

## SECTION V.

## INDIVIDUALITY AND SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES AMONG ACALEPHS.

The morphological phenomena discussed in the preceding section naturally lead to a consideration of individuality, and of the extent and importance of specific differences among the Acalephs. A few years ago the prevailing opinion among naturalists was, that, while genera, families, orders, classes, and any other more or less comprehensive division among animals, were artificial devices of science to facilitate our studies, species alone had a real existence in nature. Whether the views I have presented in the first volume of this work (p. 163), where I showed that species do not exist in any different sense from genera, families, etc., etc., had any thing to do with the change which seems to have been brought about upon this point among scientific men, is not for me to say. But, whatever be the cause, it is certainly true, that, at the present day, the number of naturalists who deny the real existence of species is greatly increased.

Darwin, in his recent work on the "Origin of Species,"<sup>1</sup> has also done much to shake the belief in the real existence of species; but the views he advocates are entirely at variance with those I have attempted to establish. For many years past I have lost no opportunity to urge the idea, that while species have no material existence, they yet exist as categories of thought, in the same way as genera, families, orders, classes, and branches of the animal kingdom. Darwin's fundamental idea, on the contrary, is, that species, genera, families, orders, classes, and any other kind of more or less comprehensive divisions among animals, do not exist at all, and are altogether artificial, differing from one another only in degree, all having originated from a successive differentiation of a primordial organic form, undergoing successively such changes as would at first produce a variety of species; then genera, as the difference became more extensive and deeper; then families, as the gap widened still farther between the groups; until, in the end, all that diversity was produced which has existed or which now exists. Far from agreeing with these views, I have, on the contrary, taken the ground that all the natural divisions in the animal kingdom are primarily distinct, founded upon different categories of characters, and that all exist in the same way, that is, as categories of thought embodied in individual living forms. I have attempted

<sup>1</sup> DARWIN (CHARLES), On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preser-

vation of favored Races in the Struggle for Life, London, 1860, 1 vol. 8vo.