

abstract of a much larger work not yet published, I could not easily give an analysis of its contents within narrower limits than those of the original, but it may be useful to enumerate briefly some of the principal classes of phenomena on which the theory of 'Natural Selection' would throw light.

In the first place, it would explain, says Mr. Darwin, the unity of type which runs through the whole organic world, and why there is sometimes a fundamental agreement in structure in the same class of beings which is quite independent of their habits of life, for such structure, derived by inheritance from a remote progenitor, has been modified, in the course of ages, in different ways, according to the conditions of existence. It would also explain why all living and extinct beings are united, by complex radiating and circuitous lines of affinity with one another, into one grand system; * also, there having been a continued extinction of old races and species in progress, and a formation of new ones by variation, why in some genera which are largely represented, or to which a great many species belong, many of these are closely but unequally related; also, why there are distinct geographical provinces of species of animals and plants, for, after long isolation by physical barriers, each fauna and flora, by varying continually, must become distinct from its ancestral type, and from the new forms assumed by other descendants which have diverged from the same stock.

The theory of indefinite modification would also explain why rudimentary organs are so useful in classification, being the remnants preserved by inheritance of organs which the present species once used — as in the case of the rudiments of eyes in insects and reptiles inhabiting dark caverns, or of the wings of birds and beetles which have lost all power of flight.

* Origin, p. 498.