

the eggs all left in their several localities to lie under water for a twelvemonth amid mud and debris,—though certain of the hardier kinds might survive such treatment, by miracle alone could the preponderating majority of the class be preserved. And be it remembered, that the expedient of having recourse to supposititious miracle in order to get over a difficulty insurmountable on every natural principle, is not of the nature of argument, but simply an evidence of the want of it. Argument is at an end when supposititious miracle is introduced.

But the very inadequate size of the ark, though a conclusive proof that all, or nearly all, the progenitors of our existing animals could not have harboured within it from any general cataclysm, does not furnish a stronger argument against the possibility of any such assemblage, than the peculiar manner in which we now find these animals distributed over the earth's surface. Linnæus held, early in the last century, that all creatures which now inhabit the globe had proceeded originally from some such common centre as the ark might have furnished ; but no zoologist acquainted with the distribution of species can acquiesce in any such conclusion now. We now know that every great continent has its own peculiar fauna ; that the original centres of distribution must have been, not one, but many ; further, that the areas or circles around these centres must have been occupied by their pristine animals in ages long anterior to that of the Noachian Deluge ; nay, that in even the latter geologic ages they were preceded in them by animals of the same general type. There are fourteen such areas or provinces enumerated by the later naturalists. It may be well, however, instead of running any risk of losing ourselves amid the less nicely defined provinces of the Old World, to draw our illustrations from two and a half provinces of later discovery, whose limits have been rigidly fixed by nature. "The great continents," says Cuvier,