

in its assemblage of forms, of the molluscan fauna of the Caspian Sea, which is few in genera and species, and of an abnormal kind, in consequence of the brackish quality of the water. In the Black Sea also, there are misshapen forms, stated by Edward Forbes to be due to the gradual freshening of the water, because of the constant influx of rivers into it, and the current that runs through the Bosphorus into the Mediterranean Sea. Both of these cases relating to continental seas of a lake-like character, bear on the subject in question; especially seeing that these British *beds of passage* are also comparatively poor in genera and species, and that some of the species, to which special names have been given, are variable or even distorted in form. Others are hard to distinguish from shells common in the Lias, while some also occur in the great Marine Rhætic series of the Continent, and some pass upwards into the ordinary Lias. It is, indeed, difficult not to believe, that some of these forms are in reality abnormal and due to the locally unhealthy quality of the water in which they lived.

Though this volume has little to do with general palæontology, the following account of the fauna bears on these questions, and I therefore give it in some detail. It also helps to show that our Rhætic beds represent a set of local conditions that marked the passage of the Keuper marls into the undoubted Lower Lias, and, indeed, in places it is hard to separate them lithologically.

In these Rhætic beds there are now known two Crustacea, viz. *Tropifer lævis*, from one of the Bone beds, and *Estheria minuta*, first known in the Keuper sandstones, and one Brachiopod, *Discina Townshendi*, the only one known in our Rhætic strata. Of the