

power of selection. In the one case, as in the other, selection does nothing without variability, and this depends in some manner on the action of the surrounding circumstances on the organism. I have, also, often personified the word Nature; for I have found it difficult to avoid this ambiguity; but I mean by nature only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws,—and by laws only the ascertained sequence of events.

It has been shown from many facts that the largest amount of life can be supported on each area, by great diversification or divergence in the structure and constitution of its inhabitants. We have, also, seen that the continued production of new forms through natural selection, which implies that each new variety has some advantage over others, inevitably leads to the extermination of the older and less improved forms. These latter are almost necessarily intermediate in structure, as well as in descent, between the last-produced forms and their original parent-species. Now, if we suppose a species to produce two or more varieties, and these in the course of time to produce other varieties, the principal of good being derived from diversification of structure will generally lead to the preservation of the most divergent varieties; thus the lesser differences characteristic of varieties come to be augmented into the greater differences characteristic of species, and, by the extermination of the older intermediate forms, new species end by being distinctly defined objects. Thus, also, we shall see how it is that organic beings can be classed by what is called a natural method in distinct groups—species under genera, and genera under families.

As all the inhabitants of each country may be said, owing to their high rate of reproduction, to be striving to increase in numbers; as each form comes into competition with many other forms in the struggle for life,—for destroy any one and its place will be seized by others; as every part of the organization occasionally varies in some slight degree, and as natural selection acts exclusively by the preservation of variations which are advantageous under the excessively complex conditions to which each being is exposed, no limit