

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that various groups have from the time of their first appearance burst out into an exuberant growth of modifications in form, size, and numbers, into all possible—and one might almost say impossible — shapes ; and they have done this within comparatively short periods, after which they have died out not less rapidly. It seems almost as if these go-ahead creatures had, by accepting every possible modification and carrying the same to the extreme, too quickly exhausted their plasticity—which, after all, must have limits—thereby becoming unable to meet successfully the requirements of further changes in their surroundings. The slowly developing groups, keeping within main lines of Evolution, and not being tempted into aberrant side-issues, had, after all, a much better chance of onward evolution.

A good example of the former are the Dinosaurs. We do not know their ancestors ; but we have here to deal only with their