

THE HISTORY OF OUR SPECIES

made the first attempt at a systematic arrangement, nomenclature, and classification of the innumerable objects in nature. As the best practical aid in that attempt he introduced the well-known double or binary nomenclature; to each kind of animals and plants he gave a particular specific name, and added to it the wider-reaching name of the genus. A *genus* served to unite the nearest related *species*; thus, for instance, Linné grouped under the genus "dog" (*canis*), as different species, the house-dog (*canis familiaris*), the jackal (*canis aureus*), the wolf (*canis lupus*) the fox (*canis vulpes*), etc. This binary nomenclature immediately proved of such great practical assistance that it was universally accepted, and is still always followed in zoological and botanical classification.

But the theoretical dogma which Linné himself connected with his practical idea of species was fraught with the gravest peril to science. The first question which forced itself on the mind of the thoughtful scientist was the question as to the nature of the concept of species, its contents, and its range. And the creator of the idea answered this fundamental question by a naïve appeal to the dominant Mosaic legend of creation: "*Species tot sunt diversae, quot diversas formas ab initio creavit infinitum ens*"—(There are just so many distinct species as there were distinct types created in the beginning by the Infinite). This theosophic dogma cut short all attempt at a natural explanation of the origin of species. Linné was acquainted only with the plant and animal worlds that exist to-day; he had no suspicion of the much more numerous extinct species which had peopled the earth with their varying forms in the earlier period of its development.

It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth cen-