

total number of species of flowering plants and ferns found in Britain amounts to 1425, those of Ireland number 970—about two-thirds of the British flora. Such facts as these are not explicable by any difference of climate rendering Ireland less fit for the reception of more varied vegetation and animal life; for the climate of Ireland is really more equable and genial than that of the regions lying to the east of it. They receive a natural and consistent interpretation on the assumption of the gradual separation of the British Islands during a continuous north-westward migration of the present flora and fauna from Central Europe.

The last neck of land which united Britain to the mainland was probably that through which the Strait of Dover now runs. Apart from the general subsidence of the whole North Sea area, which is attested by submerged forests on both sides, it is not difficult to perceive how greatly the widening of the channel has been aided by waves and tidal currents. The cliffs of Kent on the one side and of the Boulonnais on the other, ceaselessly battered by the sea, and sapped by the trickle of percolating springs, are crumbling before our very eyes. The scour of the strong tides which pour alternately up and down the strait, must have helped also to deepen the Channel. And yet, in spite of the subsidence and this constant erosion, the depression remains so shallow that its deepest parts are less than 180 feet below the surface. As has often been remarked, if St. Paul's Cathedral could be shifted from the heart of London to the middle of the strait more than half of it would rise above water.

At what relative time in the human occupation of the region this channel was finally opened cannot be determined. At first the strait was doubtless much narrower than it has since become, so that it would not oppose the