

from the south and again occupied the land, though they have not been able, in their decimated condition, to restore the exuberance of the flora of the earlier Tertiary. In point of fact, as we shall see in the next chapter, it is the floras originating within the polar circle and coming down from the north that are rich and copious. Those that, after periods of cold or submergence, return from the south, are comparatively poor. Hence the modern flora is far inferior to that of the Middle Kainozoic. In America, however, and in eastern Asia, for reasons already stated, the return was more abundant than in Europe.

Simultaneously with the return of the old temperate flora, the arctic plants that had overspread the land retreated to mountain-tops, now bared of ice and snow, and back to the polar lands whence they came; and so it happens that, on the White Mountains, the Alps, and the Himalayas, we have insular patches of the same groups of plants that exist around the pole.

These changes need not have required a very long time, for the multiplication and migration of plants are very rapid, especially when aided by the agency of migratory animals. Many parts of the land must, indeed, have been stocked with plants from various sources, and by agencies—as that of the sea—which might at first sight seem adverse to their distribution. The British Islands, for example, have no indigenous plants. Their flora consists mainly of Germanic plants, which must have migrated to Britain in that very late period of the Post-glacial when the space now occupied by the North Sea was mostly dry land. Other portions of it are Scandinavian plants, perhaps survivors of the Glacial age, or carried by migratory birds; and still another element consists of Spanish plants, brought north by spring migrants, and establishing themselves in warm and sheltered spots, just as the arctic plants do on the bleak hill-tops.