

All these characters give them an aspect far from embryonic, while, as Barrande has pointed out, this advanced position of the group has its significance greatly strengthened by the fact that in early primordial times we have to deal not with one species, but with a vast and highly differentiated group, embracing forms of many and varied subordinate types. As we shall see, these and other early animals may be regarded as of generalized types, but not as embryonic. Here, then, meets us at the outset the fact that in as far as the great groups of annulose and molluscos animals are concerned, we can trace these back no farther than to a period in which they appear already highly advanced, much specialized and represented by many diverse forms. Either, therefore, these great groups came in on this high initial plane, or we have scarcely reached half way back in the life-history of our planet.

We have, here, however, by this one consideration, attained at once to two great and dominant laws regulating the history of life. First, the law of continuity, whereby new forms come in successively, throughout geological time, though, as we shall see, with periods of greater or less frequency. Secondly, the law of specialization of types, whereby generalized forms are succeeded by those more special, and this probably connected with the growing specialization of the inorganic world. It is this second law which causes the parallelism between the history of successive species and that of the embryo.

We have already considered the claims which Eozoon and its contemporaries may urge to recognition, as beginnings of life; but when we ascend from the Laurentian beds, we find ourselves in a barren series of conglomerates, sandstones, and other rocks, indicating shore rather than sea conditions, and remarkably destitute of indications of life. These are the Huronian beds, and possibly other series associated with them. They have afforded spicules of sponges, casts of burrows of