

Mr. Crawford informs me that there are several well authenticated accounts of canoes having been drifted from Sumatra to Madagascar, and by such causes a portion of the Malayan language, with some useful plants, have been transferred to that island, which is principally peopled by negroes.

The space traversed in some of these instances was so great, that similar accidents might suffice to transport canoes from various parts of Africa to the shores of South America, or from Spain to the Azores, and thence to North America; so that man, even in a rude state of society, is liable to be scattered involuntarily by the winds and waves over the globe, in a manner singularly analogous to that in which many plants and animals are diffused. We ought not, then, to wonder, that during the ages required for some tribes of the human race to attain that advanced stage of civilization which empowers the navigator to cross the ocean in all directions with security, the whole earth should have become the abode of rude tribes of hunters and fishers. Were the whole of mankind now cut off, with the exception of one family, inhabiting the old or new continent, or Australia, or even some coral islet of the Pacific, we might expect their descendants, though they should never become more enlightened than the South Sea Islanders or the Esquimaux, to spread in the course of ages over the whole earth, diffused partly by the tendency of population to increase, in a limited district, beyond the means of subsistence, and partly by the accidental drifting of canoes by tides and currents to distant shores.

*Involuntary Influence of Man in diffusing Animals and Plants.*

Many of the general remarks which have been made respecting the influence of man in spreading or in checking the diffusion of plants apply equally to his relations with the animal kingdom. On a future occasion I shall be led to speak of the instrumentality of our species in naturalizing useful animals and plants in new regions, when explaining my views of the effects which the spreading and increase of certain species exert in the extirpation of others. At present I shall confine myself to a few remarks on the involuntary aid which man lends to the dissemination of species.

In the mammiferous class our influence is chiefly displayed in increasing the number of quadrupeds which are serviceable to us, and in exterminating or reducing the number of those which are noxious.

Sometimes, however, we unintentionally promote the multiplication of inimical species, as when we introduced the rat, which was not indigenous in the new world, into all parts of America. They have been conveyed over in ships, and now infest a great multitude of islands and parts of that continent. In like manner the Norway rat has been imported into England, where it plunders our property in ships and houses.

Among birds, the house sparrow may be cited as a species known to have extended its range with the tillage of the soil. During the