

the earliest and latest appearances of some of the fossils above mentioned, must be reckoned by millions of years. According to Mr. Darwin's views, it is only by having at our command the records of such enormous periods, that we can expect to be able to point out the gradations which unite very distinct specific forms. But the advocate of transmutation must not be disappointed if, when he has succeeded in obtaining some of the proofs which he was challenged to produce, they make no impression on the mind of his opponent. All that will be conceded is that specific variation in the Brachiopoda, at least, has a wider range than was formerly suspected. So long as several allied species were brought nearer and nearer to each other, considerable uneasiness might have been felt as to the reality of species in general, but when fifteen or more are once fairly merged in one group, constituting in the aggregate a single species, one, and indivisible, and capable of being readily distinguished from every other group at present known, all misgivings are at an end. Implicit trust in the immutability of species is then restored, and the more insensible the shades from one extreme to the other, in a word, the more complete the evidence of transition, the more nugatory does the argument derived from it appear. It then simply resolves itself into one of those exceptional instances of what is called a protean form.

Thirty years ago a great London dealer in shells, himself an able naturalist, told me that there was nothing he had so much reason to dread, as tending to depreciate his stock in trade, as the appearance of a good monograph on some large genus of mollusca; for, in proportion as the work was executed in a philosophical spirit, it was sure to injure him, every reputed species pronounced to be a mere variety becoming from that time unsaleable. Fortunately, so much progress has since been made in England in estimating the true ends and aims of science, that specimens indicating a passage