

process of selection in nature, and are there forces in nature which take the place of man's activity in artificial selection? Is there a natural tendency among wild animals and plants which acts selectingly, in a similar manner to the artificial selection practised by the designing will of man? All here depended upon the discovery of such a relation, and Darwin succeeded in this so satisfactorily, that we consider his theory of selection completely sufficient to explain, mechanically, the origin of the wild species of animals and plants. That relation which in free nature influences the forms of animals and plants, by selecting and transforming them, is called by Darwin the "*Struggle for Existence.*"

The "Struggle for Existence" has rapidly become a watchword of the day. Yet this designation is, perhaps, in many respects not very happily chosen, and the phenomena might probably have been more accurately described as "*Competition for the Means of Subsistence.*" For under the name of "Struggle for Life," many relations are comprehended which properly and strictly speaking do not belong to it. As we have seen from the letter inserted in the last chapter, Darwin arrived at the idea of the "Struggle for Existence" from the study of Malthus' book "*On the Conditions and the Consequences of the Increase of Population.*" It was proved in that important work, that the number of human beings, on the average, increases in a geometrical progression, while the amount of articles of food increase only in an arithmetical progression. This disproportion gives rise to a number of inconveniences in the human community, which cause among men a continual competition to obtain the necessary means of life, which do not suffice for all.