

sooner or later succumb to the latter in the struggle for life. But of all human individuals, as of all other organisms, by far the majority perish at the earliest period of their lives. Of the immense quantity of germs which every species produce, only very few actually succeed in developing, and of these few it is again only a very small portion which attain to the age in which they can reproduce themselves.

From the disproportion between the immense excess of organic germs and the small number of chosen individuals which are actually able to continue in existence beside one another, there follows of necessity that universal struggle for life, that constant fight for existence, that perpetual competition for the necessities of life, of which I gave a sketch in my seventh chapter. It is this struggle for life which brings natural selection into play, which in its turn is made use of by the interaction of Inheritance and Adaptation as a sifting agency, and which thus causes a continual change in all organic forms. In this struggle for acquiring the necessary conditions of existence, those individuals will always overpower their rivals who possess any individual privilege, any advantageous quality, of which their fellow-competitors are destitute. It is true we are able only in the fewest cases (in those animals and plants best known to us) to form an approximate conception of the infinitely complicated interaction of the numerous circumstances, all of which here come into combination. Only think how infinitely varied and complicated are the relations of every single human being to the rest of mankind, and in fact to the whole of the surrounding outer world. But similar relations prevail also among all animals and plants which live together in one place. All influence one