

ment of geological periods. Our life is a single drop in the ocean of eternity. The reader may call to mind the duration of life of many trees which is more than fifty times as long; for example, the dragon-trees (*Dracæna*) and monkey bread-fruit trees (*Adansonia*), whose individual life exceeds a period of five thousand years; and, on the other hand, the shortness of the individual life of many of the lower animals, for example, the infusoria, where the individual, as such, lives but a few days, or even but a few hours, contrasts no less strongly with human longevity. This comparison brings the relative nature of all measurement of time very clearly before us. If the theory of development be true at all, there must certainly have elapsed immense periods, utterly inconceivable to us, during which the gradual historical development of the animal and vegetable kingdom proceeded by the slow transformation of species. There is, however, not a single reason for accepting a definite limit for the length of these periods of development.

A second main objection which many, and more especially systematic zoologists and botanists, raise against the theory of descent, is that no *transition forms* between the different species can be found, although according to the theory of descent they ought to be found in great numbers. This objection is partly well founded and partly not so, for there does exist an extraordinarily large number of transition forms between living, as well as between extinct species, especially where we have an opportunity of seeing and comparing very numerous individuals of kindred species. Those careful investigators of individual species who so frequently raise this objection are the very persons