

cies, obtains only in restricted districts, regions, or provinces, it may have been more or less limited also in past time. Similarity or identity of fossils among formations geographically far apart, instead of proving contemporaneity, may be compatible with great discrepancies in the relative epochs of deposit. For, on any theory of the origin of species, the spread of a species, still more of any group of species, to a vast distance from the original centre of dispersion, must in most cases have been inconceivably slow. It doubtless occupied so prolonged a time as to allow of almost indefinite changes in physical geography. A species may have disappeared from its primeval birthplace, while it continued to flourish in one or more directions along its outward circle of advance. The date of the first appearance and final extinction of that species would thus differ widely, according to the locality at which we might examine its remains.

The grand march of life, in its progress from lower to higher forms, has unquestionably been broadly alike in all quarters of the globe. But nothing seems more certain than that its rate of advance has not everywhere been the same. It has moved unequally over the same region. A certain stage of progress may have been reached in one quarter of the globe many thousands of years before it was reached in another; though the same general succession of organic types might be found in each region. At the present day, for example, the higher fauna of Australia is more nearly akin to that which flourished in Europe far back in Mesozoic time than to the living fauna of any other region of the globe. There seems also to be now sufficient evidence to warrant the assertion that the progress of terrestrial vegetation has at some geological periods and in some regions