

ensure the multiplication, what are those which check the increase, of population? As all living things are dependent on each other, forming the great household or economy of nature or the smaller one of human society, a certain adjustment must exist by which a definite place and part are allotted to every individual and to every class of individuals. Malthus had studied the problem from a political point of view. Here it was felt to be of human and social importance, but his principle was applicable to all living creatures. For everywhere, even in the remotest and only recently discovered countries, we see at work the luxuriant and productive powers of nature on the one side, on the other side the many difficulties and obstacles by which they are forcibly and automatically kept in check, resulting in the ever-recurring spectacle of a "struggle for existence." The more we penetrate into the hidden and remoter provinces of nature, into the luxuriant "fauna and flora" of tropical regions, or realise the enormous population among the lower forms of life, the more the conviction forces itself upon us that the apparent equilibrium is only maintained by the phenomenon of "crowding out" on a scale compared with which the spectacle unfolded by Malthus in his special application to human societies is quite a miniature display. This process of "crowding out" must have been at work during the untold ages which modern geology has made known to us, and the effects of it must indeed have been extraordinary, and well worthy of study. That living beings, if left to their natural instincts, multiply at an enormous rate, and would, except for certain automatic checks, in a very short time

88.
"Struggle
for exist-
ence."