

islands only in recent geological times. Others are divided from the nearest continent by very deep water, so that they have probably been longer severed from the mainland. These contain more peculiar assemblages of animals and plants than the islands of the former class. Oceanic islands are more remote from the continents. They consist of rocks belonging to the more modern geological periods, and contain no animals of those classes which can migrate only by land. Such islands may be assumed never to have been connected with any continent. The study of the indigenous population of these various classes of islands affords many curious and interesting results, which Wallace has collected with vast industry and care, and which on the whole he explains in a judicious manner and in accordance with the facts of geology. When, however, he maintains that evolution of the Darwinian type is "the key to distribution," he departs widely from any basis of scientific fact. This becomes apparent when we consider the following results, which appear everywhere in the discussion of the various insular faunas and floras: (1) None of these islands, however remote, can be affirmed to have been peopled by the spontaneous evolution of the higher animals or plants from lower forms. Their population is in every case not autochthonous, but derived. (2) Even in those which are most distant from the continents, and may be supposed to have been colonized in very ancient times, there is no evidence of any very important modification of their inhabitants. (3) While the facts point to the origin of most forms of terrestrial life in the Palearctic and Nearctic regions, they afford no information as to the manner or cause of their origination. In short, so far is evolution from being a key to distribution that the whole question would become much more simple if this element were omitted altogether. A few examples may be useful to illustrate this, as well as the actual explanation of the phenomena afforded by legitimate science.

The Azores are situated in a warm temperate latitude about 900 miles west of Portugal, and separated from it by a sea 2000 fathoms in depth. The islands themselves are almost wholly volcanic, and the oldest rocks known in them are of late Miocene age. There is no probability that these islands have ever been connected with Europe or Africa, nor is there at present