

or by the observation and experience of others communicated to us, which, when perfectly reliable, should be accepted by us and be as useful to us as our own. The observations and experience of several persons, agreeing on some particular thing, is confirmatory; this, continued for generations, becomes absolute certainty. It is thus that we have attained to our knowledge of the laws of Nature, on whose stability we confidently rely. Long continued observation and experience having demonstrated that, given a certain condition and combination, a certain result will follow, and that that condition and combination will inevitably produce that result every time; change the condition or the combination, and a change in the result will assuredly follow. This we call a law of Nature, and it is the absolute stability of these that has made Science possible.

The next question is, what is Nature? I reply, all matter and life that we can investigate in time and space. Anything beyond this must belong to the supernatural, of which, by no natural powers in our possession, can we discover anything. We may draw inferences about it from what we know, but these will be always open to question; or, we may believe what we have been told about it, but there our knowledge on the whole subject ends, and our belief in the statement will be in exact proportion to our confidence in the source from which it came.

The term "Species," or its equivalent, is no doubt an ancient one, and would be in use long before classification was thought of.

When man at first began to observe the forms of life around him, he saw them separated into a great many different kinds. These kinds did not commingle and lose their identity. Each came from ancestors of its own kind, and its progeny was in its own likeness. This he concluded had been going on since their origin, and would go on to the end of their history. These kinds he called "Species," and associated with it the idea of permanence. Common names were early given by men to the common forms of their country, but it was discovered that different names had been given to the same form in different parts of the same country; so, to avoid confusion, it became necessary to describe the form and give it a name that would distinguish it in that and all other countries. As investigation became more general, and the students of one country travelled into others, their attention was arrested by the fact that some of the familiar forms had changed their appearance, and as he