

cumulated by a careful and accomplished observer may render an uninviting subject extremely interesting, and serve as a basis on which theories having an important relation to geology may rest. It is remarkable, that, notwithstanding their common occurrence, no monograph of the British species has been written. It is probable, however, that there are about eight species. All of them are probably terrestrial, though they resemble other annelids in being able to live for a considerable period under water. Salt or brackish water proves rapidly fatal to them, as was demonstrated not long ago on the occasion of a high tide overflowing the banks of the Medway at Rochester, when many thousands of worms might be seen lying dead on the surface. Worms are nocturnal in their habits, and only exceptionally leave their burrows by day; those that are found wandering on the surface are, Mr. Darwin thinks, sick individuals affected by the parasitic larvæ of a fly. They do not, however, bury themselves deeply except in very hot or very cold weather, but lie with their heads near the surface, partly perhaps for warmth, but more probably for respiratory purposes. The senses of worms, with the exception of that of touch, appear to be very feebly developed. Their sensitiveness to light varies remarkably, the sudden admission and shutting off of a bright light concentrated on the head sometimes producing no effect, whilst at others it induces a rapid retreat of the animal into its burrow. Both Mr. Darwin and Hofmeister agree in thinking that light affects worms by its duration as well as its intensity, the light of a candle even causing them to withdraw or preventing them from issuing from their holes at night. They do not appear to possess any sense of hearing, remaining quiet both when a shrill metal whistle and a bassoon were sounded near them. The faculty of smell, again, seems to be only developed so far as to enable them to distinguish the proximity of the favorite objects of food, for they remained unexcited by many odors, though they soon discovered and carried off fragments of onion and cabbage. Their sensitiveness to contact, on the other hand, is very acute, and the slightest vibration, or even the impression produced by a feeble puff of air, is sufficient to induce rapid movement. They