

closely allied but more or less distinct varieties or even species, whose geographical limits overlap, and whose members very probably occasionally breed together.

Nor is the application of this hypothesis limited to this inquiry; for it offers a possible explanation of a general conclusion at which I had previously arrived * and shall have again to discuss here—viz. : that the Scandinavian flora is present in every latitude of the globe, and is the only one that is so; and it also helps to explain another class of most interesting and anomalous facts in arctic distribution, at which I have now arrived from an examination of the vegetation of the several polar districts, and especially that of Greenland.

A glance at a circumpolar chart will show how this theory bears upon the Greenland flora, explaining the identity of its existing vegetation with that of Lapland, and accounting for its paucity of species, for the rarity of American species, of peculiar species, and of marked varieties of European species. If it be granted that the polar area was once occupied by the Scandinavian flora, and that the cold of the glacial epoch did drive this vegetation southwards, it is evident that the Greenland individuals, from being confined to a peninsula, would be exposed to very different conditions to those of the great continents. In Greenland many species would, as it were, be driven into the sea, that is, exterminated; and the survivors would be confined to the southern portion of the peninsula, and not being there brought into competition with other types, there could be no struggle for life amongst their progeny, and consequently no selection of better adapted varieties. On the return of heat, these survivors would simply travel northwards, unaccompanied by the plants of any other country.

In Arctic America and Asia, on the other hand, where there was a free southern extension and dilatation of land for the same Scandinavian plants to occupy, these would multiply enormously in individuals, branching off into varieties and subspecies, and occupy a larger area the further south they were driven; and none need be altogether lost in the southern migration over plains, though many would in the struggle that ensued when they reached the mountains of those continents and were brought into competition with the alpine plants, which the same cold had caused to descend to the plains. Hence, on the return of warmth, many

* Introductory Essay to the 'Flora of Tasmania,' p. ciii.