

no proof of possessing the same plasticity. Moreover, if the principle is true that long existence without change strengthens the habits or increases the rigidity of the species, it is a necessary inference that the American Flora, or so much of it as has existed during this long interval unchanged, must be less plastic than the present European Flora which has during the same interval been so largely modified. So many ages of persistence in type cannot well be without effect. Little as we yet know of geological time, we cannot estimate the age of the Swiss fossil plants at less than 500,000 years, and it may well be twice as much. This would place the European Flora just so far later or newer in age and in development than the American—would give it the advantage of so many years of slow change—and may be supposed in some degree to have maintained or developed that plasticity, to its possession of which we incline to attribute its ascendancy over the native American Flora. On the other hand, the native American Flora, living unchanged through all these 500,000 years, may well have lost some of the plasticity it perhaps once possessed, and have become comparatively rigid, so that it is to that extent unable to adapt itself suddenly to the changed condition of Europe at present. It cannot therefore compete with the more plastic and more highly developed forms which it meets in the Eastern World; nor can it, in all cases, even hold its own against them on a soil and in a climate where it has dwelt for so many ages unmolested. The younger plant-life of Europe, like the white man, is more than a match for the old-fashioned life of this so-called New World of America, and the weaker fails in the struggle. Our country swarms with the weeds of Europe, while our own weeds shrink from the conflict both in Europe and at home.

Summing up the argument, in conclusion, we have pointed out :—

1stly. That many of the weeds of Europe have migrated to America.

2ndly. That many of these have become so thoroughly natu-