

The head of blossom which I hold in my hand, and which I have pulled off in passing, consists wholly of male flowers; every blossom contains stamens only, without any pistils. On the other hand, here in the hedge beside me stands another plant of the same kind whose blossoms are all female; every one of them contains a young capsule only, with the embryo seeds distinctly visible when I cut it open, but without a trace of stamens. This separation of the fructifying elements on different plants is a very recent innovation in the campions, and it marks a very high degree of differentiation—one not attained by the vast majority of the most developed plant types. The open pinks, such as chick-weed, have stamens and pistils in each flower, and trust to chance for avoiding the evils of self-fertilization. Even the other campions have the same common arrangement; but the red and white campions are peculiar in the fact that they have suppressed the stamens of some flowers and the pistils of others, thus making separate individuals wholly male or wholly female. Such an arrangement of course makes cross-fertilization absolutely certain, and gives the species a great advantage in the struggle for life over its less differentiated neighbors. But the recent date of the improvement is shown by its incompleteness; for you may still find some stray campions with perfect stamens and fertile capsules in the same blossom.

Here, as in so many other cases, we catch modification in the very act. For it is a fatal habit to picture evolution to oneself as a closed chapter; we should think of it rather as a chapter that goes on writing itself continuously for ever. The white campion is even now in course of completing its development from the red; and red and white together are both even now in course of transforming themselves from the hermaphrodite to the separate condition. The naturalist can generally make a shrewd guess at the age of various

elements in every plant or animal. He can say, "This is a peculiarity which must date back before the ancestors of A diverged from the ancestors of B, because both of them share in it; this, again, is a peculiarity which dates later than the divergence, because A possesses it, while B does not: and this, once more, is a peculiarity which has hardly yet established itself, because it is sometimes found in A to-day, but sometimes it is absent." It such a manner as this it would not be difficult roughly to reconstruct the whole history of the red campion, if a busy world had leisure to hear it. But what *centum lingue*, what *ferrea vox*, would ever suffice to reconstruct the whole history of all the plants and animals I can see around me? It is easy enough to catch their episodes vaguely as one examines them; but to write them all down in definite language is a task of which even science itself may well despair.

VI.

THE HEDGEHOG'S HOLE.

THE broken ground in the warren near Tom Fowler's cottage is full of burrows of every description, from the big badger's nest by Chimney Rock to the rabbits' holes and tiny shrew-runs that honeycomb the soft mould beside the landslip. Among them are some which I know from the pattering tracks at the mouth or entrance to be the haunts of spiny hedgehogs—the long interval between the prints of fore and hind feet, and the deep toe-nail marks in the damp clay are quite unmistakable; and as we want a tame hedgehog to keep down the cockroaches in our lower premises, I have turned out to-day, armed with pick and shovel, to unearth and carry off one of these uncanny brutes for my kitchen folk. After a little digging in the bank, using my pick carefully for fear of injuring the poor timid beast, I have got to the round warm nest, a mere hollow in the ground roughly floored