

an honest desire to discover the truth, we find them yielding to the infirmity of human nature, deriving general conclusions from a limited number of particular cases, and arguing from mere hypotheses as though they were proved propositions. We can readily understand that the discovery of a theory, which explains difficulties previously unsolved, must induce a desire to force into harmony with it whatever is inconsistent, and must obstruct the view of all serious obstacles.

Even Darwin, with all his honesty of purpose and clear-sightedness, was by no means free from this failing. Where his evidence is at fault he assumes the existence of the state required by his theory. Thus, taking the testimony of the rocks, from which alone information can be obtained as to the forms of life existing in the far off ages, he admits that we cannot approach to a knowledge of the *original* forms, according to his theory, since the earliest known groups are distinct one from another. He then *assumes* that these are derived from progenitors of far earlier date, belonging to few types or to *one*, of which every trace has disappeared. And the Geological Professor Phillips, of the University of Oxford, shews that this foundation of the system has no existence, except in the imagination of its author, and observes: "As in all the known examples of the series of strata, wherever found, we have everywhere animals of the same general type, and nowhere the traces of earlier progenitors, it is clear that everywhere we are required by the hypothesis to look somewhere else, which may fairly be interpreted to signify that the hypothesis everywhere fails in the first and most important step. How is it conceivable that the second stage should be everywhere preserved, but the first nowhere?"\* These remarks of the learned Professor of Geology may open the eyes of those who have naturally assumed that every one of the earliest stages, upon which the doctrine of evolution rests, has been traced out and proved by those who speak so confidently of its truth. And even if they could trace back the evolutions to the supposed original protoplasm, the great problem would still remain, whence came this wonderful, mysterious molecule, with its indefinite marvellous potentialities?

Illustrations are adduced to prove, that by careful selec-

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\*Phillips' "Life, its Origin and Succession," p. 214.