

conditions has man been introduced into the most diverse and widely separated provinces of the animal world? It is to the comprehensive bearings of the latter indeed, that the former owes its origin; for what is the use of entertaining the question, prematurely forced upon us: Are all men of one and the same species? while authorities in science are still so much at variance as to what species really is; and writers who turn with incredulous contempt from the idea that all men are descended from Adam, can nevertheless look with complacency on their probable descent from apes! One revolutionary class of thinkers, having its representatives among the ablest men of science on this continent, incline to the belief that species is a mere logical invention of the systematiser, and that the older naturalists have converted convenient definitions and the necessary formulæ of classification, into assumed realities. On the other hand, the extreme phalanx of their opponents invent a series of catastrophes, by which each geological period is closed,—the finished act, as it were, of a grand cosmic tragedy,—and all existing life is swept away, to give place to the creation of new species for the succeeding epoch of a renovated earth. This mysterious question of the origin of species is accordingly trammelled in part by that most dangerous of all hindrances to free inquiry and unbiased scientific judgment: The foregone popular conclusions relative to the supposed terms in which alone it can be answered, consistently with the inspired history of creation. Hence, on the one hand, development theories and transmutation of species; and on the other the more consistent idea not only of permanency of species, but also, along with it, of the recognition of the same great general laws which now govern the natural world having been in operation throughout all the countless ages of organic being which geology reveals to us.

Such inquiries into first principles necessarily bring about a collision between the conservative and the progressive ranks of thought; but in the conflict—whatever dust and heat arise,—the inevitable destruction of some long cherished error is of itself a clear gain. The course and tendency of thought may meanwhile be indicated to us by some of its most striking aspects:—*e. g.*, by the startling propositions of Agassiz relative to supposed relations between the different types of man, and the geographical distribution and local circumscription of species in the world of inferior animal life. On the other hand, Professor Dana has produced his “Thoughts on