

**WHERE DID LIFE BEGIN? A BRIEF
ENQUIRY AS TO THE PROBABLE PLACE
OF BEGINNING AND THE
NATURAL COURSES OF MIGRATION
THEREFROM OF THE FLORA AND FAUNA
OF THE EARTH; A MONOGRAPH**

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Where did life begin? A brief enquiry as to the probable place of beginning and the natural courses of migration therefrom of the flora and fauna of the earth; a monograph by G. Hilton
Scribner

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G. HILTON SCRIBNER

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1.10.1 ✓

TO MY LIFE-LONG FRIEND,
THE HONORABLE CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW,
WITH WHOM, IN ALL THE DEPARTMENTS OF THOUGHT, I HAVE
SPENT SO MANY AND SUCH PLEASANT HOURS, THESE
FEW PAGES ARE, WITH SINCERE FRIENDSHIP
AND EARNEST GOOD-WILL, RESPECT-
FULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE pressing duties of an ordinarily busy life, it might be supposed, would be quite sufficient to keep one not specially trained to scientific work from meddling with such matters as are presented in this brief monograph. Indeed, I have no good excuse for finding myself engaged in this business. It might, however, be said in extenuation that the topics I have been dealing with in these pages have occupied my attention from time to time, and the conclusions have been lightly held by me as mere probabilities for a long period. With later investigations and discoveries they began to crystallize into opinions, and have at length assumed the firmness of convictions. Having in an unguarded hour disclosed them to a party of friends well fitted to judge of their

possible correctness, I have by their importunities allowed myself to be betrayed into print.

It has been my earnest desire, however, in writing these pages, to be as brief, concise, and straightforward as possible in all statements of fact, even where a little more elaboration might have made a more favorable impression. I have also striven to put forth my views in a plain garb, and I shall be abundantly satisfied if I have made myself understood; more than repaid if the few and crude suggestions I have gathered shall incite abler and better equipped men to enter this very interesting field of inquiry, and bring forth such good results as I am sure await the careful and conscientious investigator; and only regretful if I have used unwittingly any error for fact, or drawn, in the course of the argument, any false or unwarranted conclusions.

WHERE DID LIFE BEGIN?

A Monograph

WHERE DID LIFE BEGIN? OF CALIFORNIA

THE subject of the distribution of plants and animals has for a long time engaged the attention of many able, persistent, and discriminating investigators. Much time and effort have been expended in simply observing and describing the various means by which they get about from place to place. The methods and means by which the seeds of plants are carried and deposited in new localities, the agency of insects, birds, and other animals in their distribution, no less than their own ingenious contrivances for floating with the wind and tide, and for catching on to every moving object, all have been carefully observed and faithfully chronicled.

The first important truth enforced by these observations is that all organic life on the earth is in a generic, or tribal sense at least,

migratory and nomadic. The individuals may be rooted and stationary, but the tribe is travelling, constantly leaving old fields and surroundings and as constantly arriving in new ones, sometimes crowded out, sometimes starved out, and sometimes invited out, but always moving. Moving on to a new environment, better suited, taking all things into consideration, to satisfy the pressing needs of, and to develop and raise in the scale of being, both the individual and the species.

A second great truth taught by examining the methods of these movements and studying the causes of this ceaseless tramp of organic life is, that certain essential elements of the environment itself are usually found to be travelling with or a little in advance of the migratory species. In other words, the rainfall and isothermal lines, the climatic and other conditions of life, are constantly and slowly changing relative to the locality, but moving in fact. It has been frequently observed that certain species, occupying some particular territory now, have at some recent time in the past been enabled by such changes to crowd

out other occupants of the same territory, and in turn will be undoubtedly, by similar changes and means, crowded out themselves. All kinds of plants and animals which have remained in one locality until they have lost the means of movement, which cannot or will not travel, must sooner or later first degenerate and then be exterminated. For instance, a rain-belt or an area of dew-fall veers slowly but permanently from the north to the south; an arid soil is made fertile, and a fertile soil is left arid; the grass and flowering plants in endless variety move with the dew or the rain-belt; the deer follow the grass, and the wolves follow the deer; a thousand varieties of insects follow the flowering plants, and the insectivorous birds and other animals, herbivorous and carnivorous, bring up the rear, and so on through all the interdependencies of life, the change of a single essential condition, the movement of one variety, causes a disturbance and movement of all in the neighborhood. Thence comes all this ceaseless and migratory activity among the flora and fauna of the earth.