

of the group dates back at least as far as Pliocene times. There is a total absence of all terrestrial Vertebrata, other than those which are known to have been introduced by man. Flying animals, on the other hand, are abundant: namely, 53 species of birds, one species of bat, a few species of butterflies, moths and hymenoptera with 74 species of indigenous beetles. All these animals are unmodified European species, with the exception of one bird and many of the beetles. Of the 74 indigenous species of the latter, 36 are not found in Europe; but 19 are natives of Madeira or the Canaries, and 3 are American, doubtless transplanted by drift-wood. The remaining 14 species occur nowhere else in the world, though for the most part they are allied to other European species. There are 69 known species of land-shells, of which 37 are European, and 32 -- peculiar, though all allied to European forms. Lastly, there are 480 known species of plants of which 40 are peculiar, though allied to European species.

"**St. Helena.** -- A small volcanic island, ten miles long by eight wide, situated in mid-ocean, 1,100 miles from Africa, and 1,800 from South America. It is very mountainous and rugged, bounded for the most part by precipices, rising from ocean depths of 17,000 feet, to a height above the sea-level of nearly 3,000. When first discovered it was richly clothed with forests; but these were all destroyed by human agency during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

"There is a total absence of all indigenous mammals, reptiles, freshwater fish, and true land-birds. There is, however, a species of plover, allied to one in South Africa; but it is specifically distinct, and therefore peculiar to the island. The insect life, on the other hand, is abundant. Of beetles, no less than 129 species are believed to be aboriginal, and, with one single exception, the whole number are peculiar to the island. 'But in addition to this large amount of specific peculiarity (perhaps unequalled anywhere else in the world) the beetles of this island are remarkable for their generic isolation, and for the altogether exceptional proportion in which the great divisions of the order are represented. The species belong to 39 genera, of which no less than 25 are peculiar to the island; and many of these are such isolated forms that it is impossible to find their allies in any particular country.' (Wallace) More than two-thirds of all the species belong to one group of weevils -- a circumstance which serves to explain the great wealth of beetle-population, the weevils being beetles which live in wood, and St. Helena having been originally a densely wooded island. . . About two-thirds of the whole number of beetles, or over 80 species, show no close affinity with any existing insects, while the remaining third have some relations, though often very remote, with European and African forms. . . -

"Lastly, the plants likewise tell the same story. The truly indigenous flowering plants are about 50 in number, besides 26 ferns. Forty of the former and ten of the latter are peculiar to the island, and, as Sir Joseph Hooker tells us, 'cannot be regarded as very close specific allies of any other plants at all.' Seventeen of them belong to peculiar genera, and the others all differ so markedly as species from their congeners, that not one comes under the category of being an insular form of a continental species. So that with respect to its plants, no less than with respect to its animals, we find that the island of St. Helena constitutes a little world of unique species, allied among themselves, but diverging so much from all other known forms that in many cases they constitute unique genera.