

by the first great hardship, or race struggle it encountered, leaving, perhaps, a few hardy survivors to propagate a more suitable offspring, and so regenerate the race. A weakly child of the Anglo-Saxon race that, only a few years ago, could not have survived is now by surgery, careful nursing, and suitable diet, saved to grow to maturity and to beget still more unhealthy issue.

It is sometimes almost absurd to hear the popular theories about the cause of the present partial failure of the human organs. Take, that dental decay, which will, without doubt, at its present rate of increase, soon make the Anglo-Saxon a toothless race. Insufficient lime, too much sugar, hot tea, are some of the causes given. The fact is not considered that any number of an uncivilized or lately civilized race may be put under the same conditions, or even worse ones, as the Polynesians on the sugar plantations of Queensland, and their teeth will show no signs of failure. The same may be said of the negro of the West Indies. Yet, when the negroes of America have been as long removed from the natural selection in the struggle for existence of the savage as has the Saxon, his teeth and other organs not necessary to his existence, or the due propagation of his race will show the same decay, for the very same reason that the larger birds of New Zealand and the islands to the south-east of Africa became wingless. Wings were not necessary to those birds, which found their food on the ground, because they had no large carnivorous mammal or reptile to escape from. But on the arrival of man, dog, and cat, these flightless birds, not having the saving speed of the ostrich family, were soon swept from the face of the land of their degeneration.

One great advantage the inhabitants of that great tri-continent, called the Old World, have hitherto had over the races of America, the Pacific islands, and Australia, is that by the same law of survival of the fittest; they were inured, or proof against diseases that were fatal to the later races to whom they were a novelty. There can be little doubt that many of the numerous

diseases now prevalent, such as measles, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, etc., that have proved so fatal to the natives of newly-discovered countries, were once much more malignant to the inhabitants of the Old World than they are at present. But as each of these ancient diseases ran its course, it carried off all whose particular organisms made it fatal to them, leaving a remnant who were able to resist its fatal effect. And as like begets like, their descendants, children of father and mother whose constitutions were proof against the disease, would become still less liable to fatal results from the epidemic. These, being culled again and again by the same disease, would leave an offspring still more capable of resistance. This was shown in the first, at least in modern times, and terrible diphtheria epidemic of some 40 years ago in England. Also amongst domestic mammals in the same country, when pleuro-pneumonia, in its first visit, killed enormous quantities of cattle, fully four-fifths of those attacked dying, leaving a remnant, the offspring of which, on a later occasion, were able to resist the disease with much smaller loss. See also the late fatal results of a first visit of rinderpest across the equator in Africa. It has now carried off all cattle that are particularly liable to take that epidemic, and will never again, unless after a total absence of centuries, have such fatal effect upon a stock bred from the survivors, whose blood corpuscles have successfully resisted the disease†.

Keeping all this in mind, one can imagine the effect on newly-discovered races brought into contact with all the—to them—unknown diseases of the Old World at the same time. Such a shock totally deprived Van Dieman's Land of its native race in a few years. Nearly all Australian Aborigines brought into contact with any white centre went the same way in nearly as short a period. And earlier, in America, millions were swept away in a few years by the influx of

†The writer understands in the Russian home of rinderpest it does comparatively little harm.