

geological strata, consisting of portions of the bodies of creatures that lived long ago or of traces left by such creatures. As we have seen, this material is largely fragmentary. Usually only small portions of bodies have been preserved. In the attempt to arrange them in such a way as to show a steady progression from simple to complex there are innumerable gaps, many of them extremely great. Even if there were to be found a vast set of complete skeletons that could be arranged in such a way as to show an unbroken gradual progression, this would not in itself prove evolutionary relationship, particularly since the most important parts of these creatures have usually disappeared, and there is no way to reconstruct their physiology with any high degree of certainty. In addition, there is a large element of conjecture in the suggested dating of many of the strata.

DISPLAYS AND CHARTS

On the basis of fossils, displays are sometimes set up to show the alleged evolution of man or of a certain group of animals, portraying a gradual succession of slightly differing creatures leading up to a type found in the world today. Such reconstructions can make a very deep impression, and are therefore extremely effective propaganda for evolution. Unfortunately a great part of what is visible in them is sometimes imaginary. Thus a picture showing alleged ancestors of man may portray them as covered with thick hair and standing in a stooped posture, though the fossil skeleton provides no indication as to whether a particular creature was covered with hair or not. The question of the posture also rests to quite an extent upon conjecture. Sometimes a whole figure is reconstructed on the basis of a skull and part of a jaw. A century ago those who made such diagrams or exhibits were very careful to indicate clearly what portions were reconstructed from imagination and what portions were actually based on material that had been found in geological strata. Recently such indications have quite generally been omitted, thus causing the displays sometimes to give an impression that is largely conjectural. Before one is influenced by such exhibits he should make a careful investigation as to the exact amount of actual