

and yet the geographical distribution of most of the shallow-water species is well defined, and frequently somewhat restricted. Unfortunately we know as yet very little about the general distribution of marine animals. Except along the coasts of Britain and Scandinavia, a part of the North American coast, and a part of the Mediterranean, we know absolutely nothing beyond the shore zone, or at all events beyond 10 or 15 fathoms. What little we do know is confined almost entirely to the mollusca, and is due, not so much to scientific research as to the commercial value which the acquisitive zeal of conchologists has placed upon rare shells. It may be supposed, however, that the same laws which regulate the distribution of littoral and sub-littoral mollusca, affect in like manner that of shallow-water annulosa, echinoderms, and cœlenterates; indeed, from the scattered observations which have been made on the distribution of these latter groups, it seems certain that such is the case.

Woodward<sup>1</sup> regarded the marine mollusca as occupying eighteen well-defined 'provinces,' fulfilling more or less completely the condition of having at least one-half of the species peculiar to the province. Edward Forbes defined twenty-five such 'regions;' but it must be remembered that in both cases at least three-fourths of the number of areas defined were based upon the most imperfect knowledge of the larger and more conspicuous shore shells only. It has been constantly observed in the few cases confined entirely to the shores of the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean,

<sup>1</sup> A Manual of the Mollusca. By S. P. Woodward. London, 1851. P. 354.