

hand, though the phenomena which it comprises are apparently among the most curious and pregnant of Evolution. Dr. August Weismann, of Freiburg, takes it in hand in a series of essays, a translation of which has been published by the University of Oxford. We cannot attempt in our narrow space to summarize the scientific results. But they are somewhat melancholy for Man. For him, the crown, as he thinks, of creation, Nature seems to feel no special care. To man is allotted at most one century, to an elephant are allotted two. The longevity of birds is wonderful: ravens, parrots, eider ducks, eagles, vultures and wild geese reach a century. A falcon is said to have lived 162 years, and swans are said to have lived 300. It appears, according to Dr. Weismann, that Nature's ground of discrimination is purely physical and that she measures out life not by the dignity of the being or his capacities of development, but by the necessities of reproduction. A bird which lays only one egg in a year and is liable to having that one egg destroyed by a number of accidents, would not be able to keep up the race if it did not live long enough to lay a great many annual eggs; though why the bird lays only one egg remains to be explained, and the explanation seems to involve another Evolutionary process requiring almost unlimited time. We gather, too, the unconsolatory impression that if there is any care it is not for the individual, who is so dear to each of us, but only for the race. The removal of generations by death seems in like manner to be determined by the consideration that "the unending life of the Metazoan body would be a useless luxury," and that as the individuals would become damaged in course of time would be not only valueless but harmful to the species. Death is not universal: the lowest organisms do not die but propagate by fission. However, where biology with its centenarian geese and undying amoeba ends, moral philosophy begins. It cannot be contended that the moral and intellectual development of man has no object but reproduction or physical perfection. What physical purpose is served by poetry? By what physical process