

derived from the experiences of all his innumerable ancestors—that they sum up the experiences of all antecedent life. These two discoveries,” Glanville continued, “the discovery of the evolution of mind as an integral part of the evolution of the complex brain, and finally the discovery of the transmission of the mental qualities of heredity, are as epoch-making as that of Darwin, and fulfil its stupendous significance. I told you, Alistair, not to be too polysyllabic. I’m afraid I’ve just been sinning against my own injunctions; but this is a subject about which it’s difficult to speak calmly. Whenever I think of these discoveries, I feel as if I’d descended from a new Sinai, with my mind full of some incredible vision. And I’ve not done yet. Tell me—is everybody bored? Nobody’s been drinking any coffee. Let us have an interval for refreshment.”

In Glanville’s manner there was a certain trace of excitement, which stimulated the curiosity of his hearers; and they urged him to go on. He promised to do so presently; and meanwhile, in the interval of coffee-drinking, Mr. Hancock took the opportunity of interjecting a criticism of his own.

“Personally, Mr. Glanville,” he said, “I agree with you entirely. I don’t entertain a doubt, any more than Huxley did, that the Universe is a single fact; but, as Huxley himself very candidly confessed, there does exist a rift between organic matter and inorganic, which experience and observation have not as yet filled up.”

“True,” replied Glanville; “but there was a similar rift between species till sixty years ago. Rifts of this kind—the rifts of ignorance in our knowledge—are the delights of our modern theologians, and their sole refuge. They hide themselves there like rabbits in rocks; and as soon as one is filled up, they scuttle in terror across the daylight, and slink into the darkness of another. This rift between the organic and the inorganic is their favourite retreat at this moment; of all the rifts, in reality, it offers them the most useless shelter. For let us suppose in the first place that the rift is permanent