

"biophors," the bearers or containers of life, life which reveals itself in the creation of new forms? Since Weismann concedes so much of reciprocity between environment and life, why does he seem to stop short of the admission of its universality? The answer to this question reveals what seems to the present writer a fundamental difficulty in the doctrine we have been considering—it is a materialistic and mechanical explanation of phenomena which are not merely material and mechanical.

"Heredity is the transmission of the *physical* nature of the parent to the offspring."¹ Is, then, the psychical nature not transmitted? Does it count for nothing in the process, or is its transmission not "heredity"? The answer of Weismann may be found in the further statement that "all differences—even the qualitative ones—are ultimately of a *quantitative* nature."² Here is the presupposition of this whole doctrine. It is because of this presupposition that Weismann has to maintain at any cost the identity of the germ-plasm through all the countless variations of life. If we limit our explanations to physical or mechanical considerations, we must assume an indefinite number of potentialities in the earliest cells, the potentialities of all the vast organic world. The wonder that a fertilised ovum can contain all the characters of the developing and the mature organism shrinks into nothingness beside this wonder, that a universe of being and an eternity of time should be held within a speck of subtly compounded albumen. Physical nature assumes a majesty so great that life and mind itself can suffer no indignity in being but a form or manifestation of it—but it is always where life is that this physical wonder is also.

"The structure of the idioplasm," Weismann says, "must be far more complex than we can possibly imagine."³ Doubtless it is so, but the greatest mystery is after all not the complexity of the original cell but its development, not the structure but the power. Now this power reveals itself as life, reveals itself more and more as mind. How then shall we explain heredity, where mind is, if we deliberately rule mind out?

¹ *Germ-Plasm*, p. 410. Italics mine.

² *Ibid.*, p. 414. Italics Weismann's.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.