

mean that form of death which is brought about by the intrusion of bacteria. Poisoning the system with their waste products, choking the blood-vessels, causing fatal lesions, setting up inflammation—in many ways these intruders cause death, which can hardly be laid to the fault of the organism except in so far as its powers of resistance are imperfect.

(c) Natural death is that cessation of life which results from the accumulation of physiological arrears. Day after day, year after year, it may be decade after decade, the machinery of the living body holds out; its necessary wear and tear is made good again by food and in rest, but the recuperation is not always complete. Especially if there has been over-stimulation, as in the case of brain-cells, or over-strain, as in the case of the heart, there is a slow mounting up of physiological debts. In fact the living organism, unless it be a very simple one, goes slowly into debt to itself. The items may be infinitesimal, but the sum-total involves that physiological bankruptcy which is death.

In contrast, then, to the old view that natural death is an intrinsic necessity, the modern conception, as worked out by Weismann and others, regards death as incident on the complex organization of the body, on the limits which are set to the asexual multiplication of cells, and on the occurrence of expensive processes of reproduction. Moreover, Weismann has argued that the length of life has been, must have been, affected by the action of natural selection. "Worn-out individuals are not only valueless to the species, but they are even harmful, for they take the place of those which are sound. Hence, by the operation of natural selection, the life of our hypothetically immortal individual would be shortened by the amount which was useless to the species. It would be reduced to a length which would afford the most favourable conditions for the existence of as large a number as possible of vigorous individuals at the same time."

Thoughts of death lead on naturally to thoughts of immortality, on which, in a limited sense, ^{Organic} the biologist has something to say. ^{Immortality.}

It was Weismann, with his characteristic habit of