

## THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

certain conditions (naturally, only in the form of latent energy).

Although in the soul-blending at the moment of conception only the latent forces of the two parent souls are transmitted by the coalescence of the erotic cell-nuclei, still it is possible that the hereditary psychic influence of earlier, and sometimes very much older, generations may be communicated at the same time. For the laws of *latent heredity* or *atavism* apply to the soul just as validly as to the anatomical organization. We find these remarkable phenomena of reversion in a very simple and instructive form in the alternation of generations of the polyps and medusæ. Here we see two very different generations alternate so regularly that the first resembles the third, fifth, and so on; while the second (very different from the preceding) is like the fourth, sixth, etc. (*Natural History of Creation*). We do not find such alternation of generations in man and the higher animals and plants, in which, owing to continuous heredity, each generation resembles the next; nevertheless, even in these cases we often meet with phenomena of reversion, which must be reduced to the same law of latent heredity.

Eminent men often take more after their grandparents than their parents even in the finer shades of psychic activity—in the possession of certain artistic talents or inclinations, in force of character, and in warmth of temperament; not infrequently there is a striking feature which neither parents nor grandparents possessed, but which may be traced a long way back to an older branch of the family. Even in these remarkable cases of atavism the same laws of heredity apply to the *psyche* and to the physiognomy, to the personal quality of the sense-organs, muscles, skeleton,