

not hint at any depreciation of a good stock, for, as Galton shows, the offspring of two ordinary members of a gifted stock will not regress like the offspring of a couple equal in gifts to the former, but belonging to a poorer stock, above the average of which they have risen.

The fact of regression tells against the full transmission of any signal talent. Children are not likely to differ from mediocrity in a given direction so widely as their parents do in the same direction. "The more bountifully a parent is gifted by nature the more rare will be his good fortune if he begets a son who is as richly endowed as himself, and still more so if he has a son who is endowed more largely." But "the law is even-handed; it levies an equal succession-tax on the transmission of badness as of goodness".

Thus we reach the conception of the nation as a vast fraternity, with an average towards which the offspring of the extraordinarily gifted tend to sink, but to which the offspring of the under-average tend as surely to rise.

We have noticed two great modern advances in regard to the problem of heredity—the doctrine of the continuity of the germ-plasm and the inquiry into the transmissibility of acquired characters, both closely associated with Weismann.

Galton's Law
of Ancestral
Inheritance.

To these we would add a third—Galton's law of ancestral inheritance. From data based on stature, the colour of Basset hounds, &c., Galton was led to a very important generalization, which he states as follows:— "Each parent contributes on an average one quarter, or $(0.5)^2$, each grandparent one-sixteenth, or $(0.5)^4$, and so on, and that generally the occupier of each ancestral place in the n^{th} degree, whatever be the value of n , contributes $(0.5)^{2n}$ of the heritage". The law has been ably expounded and corroborated by Karl Pearson, who gives it an even more precise form.

There are still some difficulties to be met, but the formulation of the law is a great step, even if modifications should afterwards be necessary. As Prof. Pearson says: "the law of ancestral heredity is likely to prove one of the most brilliant of Mr. Galton's dis-