

Prof. H. F. Osborn, who have independently suggested an ingenious theory as to the possible evolutionary interest of modifications. To this theory the unfortunate title "organic selection" has been given.

There are many facts which show that the body of an organism may react adaptively to changes in function and environment; the skin may be hardened, a muscle may be strengthened, even a bone may be modified. These modifications are obviously of individual value, but if they are not in any degree transmissible they are not of *direct* racial value. It may happen, however, that a congenital variation occurs in the same direction as the adaptive modification, and if the modification be of importance—of value in deciding survival—it may act, so to speak, as a shield for the incipient congenital variation until this has gained strength. The two processes of modification and variation will thus help one another.

As Prof. Lloyd Morgan puts it: "Any congenital variations similar in direction to these modifications will tend to support them and to favour the organism in which they occur. Thus will arise a congenital predisposition to the modifications in question. The longer this process continues, the more marked will be the predisposition, and the greater the tendency of the congenital variations to conform in all respects to the persistent plastic modifications; while the plasticity still continuing, the modifications become yet further adaptive. Thus plastic modification leads, and germinal variation follows: the one paves the way for the other."

In short, it is suggested that "the modification *as such* is not inherited, but is the condition under which congenital variations are favoured and given time to get a hold on the organism, and are thus enabled by degrees to reach the fully adaptive level".

What can one say in conclusion, except this, that while the general conception of evolution stands more firmly than ever as a reasonable modal interpretation of nature, there is great uncertainty in regard to almost every question concerning the factors in the evolution process.

Conclusion.