

or a succeeding generation will display a corresponding departure in a greater or less degree. Should both parents be physiologically imperfect, we may expect the imperfections, if they are of a like nature, to be intensified in the children. It is in this respect, therefore, that the risk of consanguineous marriages arises, for no family can lay claim to physiological perfection.

"When we speak of tendencies, susceptibilities, proclivities, or predisposition to the transmission of characters, whether they be normal or pathological, we employ terms which undoubtedly have a certain vagueness. We are as yet quite unable to recognise, by observation alone, in the germ-plasm any structural change which would enable us to say that a particular tendency or susceptibility will be manifested in an organism derived from it. We can only determine this by following out the life-history of the individual. Still, it is not the less true that these terms express a something of the importance of which we are all conscious. So far as man is concerned, the evidence in favour of a tendency to the transmission of both structural and functional modifications, which are either of dis-service, or positively injurious, or both, is quite as capable of proof as that for the transmission of characters which are likely to be of service. Hence, useless as well as useful characters may be selected and transmitted hereditarily."

He related the well-known case of Lord Morton's (?) Arabian mare, which "produced a hybrid the sire of which was a quagga, and the young one was marked by zebra-like stripes. But the same Arabian had subsequently two foals, the sire of which was an Arab horse, and these also showed some zebra-like markings. How, then, did these markings, characteristic of a very different animal, arise in these foals, both parents of which were Arabians? I can imagine it being said that this was a case of reversion to a very remote striped ancestor, common alike to the horse and the quagga. But, to my mind, no such far-fetched and hypothetical explanation is necessary. The cause of the appearance of the stripes seems to me to be much nearer and more obvious. I believe that the mother had acquired during her prolonged gestation with the hybrid, the power of transmitting the quagga-like characters from it, owing to the interchange of material which had taken place between them in connection with the nutrition of the young one. For it must be kept in mind that in placental mammals an interchange of material takes place in opposite directions, from the young to the mother as well as from the mother to the young. In this way the germ-plasm of the mother, belonging to ova which had not yet matured, had become modified whilst still lodged in the ovary. This acquired modification had influenced her future offspring, derived from that germ-plasm, so that they in their turn, though in a more diluted form, exhibited zebra-like markings. If this explanation be correct, then we have an illustration of the germ-plasm having been directly influenced by the soma, and of somatogenic acquired characters having been transmitted."

This is the more valuable inasmuch as it is the result of independent thought and investigation, Sir W. Turner having assured me that he had not read my letter in the JOURNAL, with which, however, he is now pleased to say that he agrees, by making the following statement: "In my judgment there is, as you have put, a physiological difference between the marriages with a deceased wife's sister and a deceased husband's brother."

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The above amount has been paid over to Dr. Mead towards defraying the expenses entailed by his successful defence of the action brought against him, which amounted to £195.

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#### BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Applied Anatomy: Surgical, Medical, and Operative. By John McLachlan, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.S. Vols. i and ii. Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1889.

Suggestions to Mothers. By a Mother. Second Edition. London: J. and A. Churchill. 1889.

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