

and gradual palæontological development, or Phylogeny, dependent on the laws of Inheritance and Adaptation.

As I shall have, later, to explain this most interesting and important law of nature more fully, I shall not dwell further upon it here, and merely call attention to the fact that it can only be explained and its causes understood by the Theory of Descent, while without that theory it remains completely incomprehensible and inexplicable. The Theory of Descent in the same way shows us *why* individual animals and plants must develop at all, and *why* they do not come into life at once in a perfect and developed state. No supernatural history of creation can in any way explain to us the great mystery of organic development. To this most weighty question, as well as to all other biological questions, the Theory of Descent gives us perfectly satisfactory answers—and always answers which refer to purely mechanical causes, and point to purely physico-chemical forces as the causes of phenomena which we were formerly accustomed to ascribe to the direct action of supernatural, creative forces. Hence, by our theory the mystic veil of the miraculous and supernatural, which has hitherto been allowed to hide the complicated phenomena of this branch of natural knowledge, is removed. All the departments of Botany and Zoology, and especially the most important portion of the latter, Anthropology, became reasonable. The dimming mirage of mythological fiction can no longer exist in the clear sunlight of scientific knowledge.

Of special interest among general biological phenomena are those which are quite irreconcilable with the usual supposition, that every organism is the product of a creative power, acting for a definite object. Nothing in this respect