A DARWINIAN STUDY.

By Alfred R. Wallace.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with entomology we may state, that many butterflies have two, or even three broods in a year. One brood appears in spring, their larvæ having fed during the preceding autumn, and passed the winter in the pupa state, while the others appear later in the year, having passed rapidly through all their transformations and thus never having been exposed to the cold of winter. In most cases the insects produced under these opposite conditions present little or no perceptible difference; but in others there is a constant variation, and sometimes this is so great that the two forms have been described as distinct species. The most remarkable case among European butterflies is that of *Araschnia prorsa*, the winter or spring form of which was formerly considered to be a distinct species and named *Araschnia levana*. The two insects differ considerably in both sexes, in markings, in color, and even in the form of the wings, so that till they were bred and found to be alternate broods of the same species (about the year 1830) no one doubted their being altogether distinct.

In order to learn something of the origin and nature of this curious phenomenon Dr. Weisman has for many years carried on a variety of experiments, breeding the species in large numbers and subjecting the pupæ to artificial heat or cold for the purpose of hastening or retarding the transformation. The result of these experiments is, that by subjecting the summer brood to severe artificial cold in the pupa state, it may be made to produce perfect insects the great majority of which are of the winter form, but, on the other hand, no change of conditions that has yet been tried has any effect in changing the winter to the summer form. Taking this result in connection with the fact that in high latitudes where there is only one brood a year it is always the winter form, Dr. Weismann was led to the hypothesis that this winter form was the original type of the species, and that the summer form has been produced gradually, since the glacial epoch, by the summer becoming longer and thus admitting of the production of a second or summer brood. This explains why the production of the winter form (*A. levana*) from summer larvæ is easy, it being a reversion to the ancestral type; while the production of the summer form (*A. prorsa*) from autumnal larvæ is impossible, because that form is the result of gradual development; and processes of development which have taken thousands of years to bring about cannot be artificially reproduced in a single season.

This hypothesis was supported by experiments with another two-brooded species, *Pieris napi*, with similar results, the winter form being produced with certainty by the application of cold to summer pupæ; and Mr. Edwards, in America, has made similar experiments with the various forms of *Papilii ajax*, finding that the summer broods can be changed into the winter form by the application of cold, while the winter broods can never be made to assume the summer form by hastening the process of transformation. In the Arctic regions and in the high Alps there is only one form of *Pieris napi*, which very closely resembles the winter form of the rest of Europe, and this could never be the least changed by rapidly developing the pupæ under the influence of heat.

Another curious case is that of one of the Lycænidæ (*Plebeius agestis*) which exhibits three forms, which may be designated as A, B, and C. The first two, A and B, are alternate broods (winter and summer) in Germany, while in Italy the corresponding forms are B and C, so that B is the summer form in Germany and the winter form in Italy. Here we see climatic varieties in process of formation in a very curious way.

That temperature during the pupa stage is a very powerful agent in modifying the characters of butterflies, is well shown by the case of *Polyommatus phlæas*. The two broods of this insect are alike in Germany, while in Italy the summer brood has the wings dusky instead of copper-colored. The period of development is exactly the same in both countries, so that the change must, it is argued, be attributed to the higher temperature of the Italian summer. It has been noticed that in Italy a large number of species of butterflies are thus seasonally dimorphic which are not so in Central and Northern Europe.

Dr. Weismann lays great stress on the varied effects of temperature in modifying allied species or the two sexes of the same species, from which he argues that the essential cause of all these changes is to be found in peculiarities of physical constitution, which cause different species, varieties, or sexes to respond differently to the same change of temperature; and he thinks that many sexual differences can be traced to this cause alone without calling in the aid of sexual selection. The general result arrived at by the laborious investigation of these phenomena is, that—"a species is only caused to change through the influence of changing external conditions of life, this change being in a fixed direction which entirely depends on the physical nature of the varying organism, and is different in different species, or even in the two sexes of the same species;" and he adds:—"According to my view, transmutation by purely internal causes is not to be entertained. If we could absolutely suspend the changes of the external conditions of life, existing species would remain stationary. The action of external inciting causes, in the widest sense of the word, is alone able to produce modifications; and even the never-failing 'individual variations,' together with the inherited dissimilarity of constitution, appear to me to depend upon unlike external influences, the inherited constitution itself being dissimilar, because the individuals have been at all times exposed to somewhat varying external influences." The present writer has arrived at almost exactly similar conclusions to these, from a study of the geographical distribution and specific variation of animal forms, as stated in an article on "The Origin of Species and Genera," which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* of January last, and it is gratifying to find them supported by the results of a very different line of inquiry, and by the authority of so eminent and original an observer as Dr. Weismann.

A FOURTH STATE OF MATTER[1]

In introducing the discussion on Mr. Spottiswoode and Mr. Moulton's paper on the "Sensitive State of Vacuum Discharges," at the meeting of the Royal Society on April 15, Dr. De La Rue, who occupied the chair, good-naturedly challenged me to substantiate my statement that there is such a thing as a fourth or ultra-gaseous state of matter.

I had no time then to enter fully into the subject; nor was I prepared, on the spur of the moment, to marshal all the facts and reasons which have led me to this conclusion. But as I find that many other scientific men besides Dr. De La Rue are in doubt as to whether matter has been shown to exist in a state beyond that of gas, I will now endeavor to substantiate my position.

I will commence by explaining what seems to me to be the constitution of matter in its three states of solid, liquid, and gas.

I. First as to Solids:—These are composed of discontinuous molecules, separated from each other by a space which is relatively large—possibly enormous—in comparison with the diameter of the central nucleus we call *molecule*. These molecules, themselves built up of *atoms*, are governed by certain forces. Two of these forces I will here refer to—attraction and motion. Attraction when exerted at sensible distances is known as *gravitation*, but when the distances are molecular it is called *adhesion* and *cohesion*. Attraction appears to be independent of absolute temperature; it increases as the distance between the molecules diminishes; and were there no other counteracting force the result would be a mass of molecules in actual contact, with no molecular movement whatever—a state of things beyond our conception—a state, too, which would probably result in the creation of something that, according to our present views would not be *matter*.

This force of cohesion is counterbalanced by the movements of the individual molecules themselves, movements

[1] "On a Fourth State of Matter," in a letter to the Secretary of the Royal Society. By W. Crookes, F.R.S.

varying directly with the temperature, increasing and diminishing in amplitude as the temperature rises and falls. The molecules in solids do not travel from one part to another, but possess adhesion and retain fixity of position about their centre of oscillation. Matter, as we know it, has so high an absolute temperature that the movements of the molecules are large in comparison with their diameter, for the mass must be able to bear a reduction of temperature of nearly 300° C. before the amplitude of the molecular excursions would vanish.

The state of solidity, therefore—the state which we are in the habit of considering *par excellence* as that of *matter*—is merely the effect on our senses of the motion of the discrete molecules among themselves.

Solids exist of all consistencies, from the hardest metal, the most elastic crystal, down to thinnest jelly. A perfect solid would have no viscosity, *i.e.*, when rendered discontinuous or divided by the forcible passage of a harder solid, it would not close up behind and again become continuous.

In solid bodies the cohesion varies according to some unknown factor which we call chemical constitution ; hence each kind of solid matter requires raising to a different temperature before the oscillating molecules lose their fixed position with reference to one another. At this point, varying in different bodies through a very wide range of temperature, the solid becomes liquid.

II. In liquids the force of cohesion is very much reduced, and the adhesion or the fixity of position of the centres of oscillating molecules is destroyed. When artificially heated, the inter-molecular movements increase in proportion as the temperature rises, until at last cohesion is broken down, and the molecules fly off into space with enormous velocities.

Liquids possess the property of viscosity—that is to say, they offer a certain opposition to the passage of solid bodies; at the same time they cannot permanently resist such opposition, however slight, if continuously applied. Liquids vary in consistency from the hard, brittle, apparently solid pitch to the lightest and most ethereal liquid capable of existing at any particular temperature.

The state of liquidity, therefore, is due to inter-molecular motions of a larger and more tumultuous character than those which characterize the solid state.

III. In gases the molecules fly about in every conceivable direction, with constant collision and enormous and constantly varying velocities, and their mean free path is sufficiently great to release them from the force of adhesion. Being free to move, the molecules exert pressure in all directions, and were it not for gravitation they would fly off into space. The gaseous state remains so long as the collisions continue to be almost infinite in number, and of inconceivable irregularity. The state of gaseity, therefore, is pre-eminently a state dependent on collisions. A given space contains millions of millions of molecules in rapid movement in all directions, each molecule having millions of encounters in a second. In such a case the length of the mean free path of the molecules is exceeding small compared with the dimensions of the containing vessel, and the properties which constitute the ordinary gaseous state of matter, which depend upon constant collisions, are observed.

What, then, are these molecules? Take a single lone molecule in space. Is it solid, liquid, or gas? Solid it cannot be, because the idea of solidity involves certain properties which are absent in the isolated molecule. In fact, an isolated molecule is an inconceivable entity, whether we try, like Newton, to visualise it as a little hard spherical body, or, with Boscovich and Faraday, to regard it as a centre of force, or accept Sir William Thomson's vortex atom. But if the individual molecule is not solid, *à fortiori* it cannot be regarded as a liquid or gas, for these states are even more due to inter-molecular collisions than is the solid state. The individual molecules, therefore, must be classed by themselves in a disti ct state or category.

The same reason applies to two or to any number of contiguous molecules, provided their motion is arrested or controlled, so that no collisions occur between them ; and even supposing this aggregation of isolated non-colliding molecules to be bodily transferred from one part of space to another, that kind of movement would not thereby cause this molecular collocation to assume the properties of gas ; a molecular wind may still be supposed to consist of isolated molecules, in the same way as the discharge from a mitrailleuse consists of isolated bullets.

Matter in the fourth state is the ultimate result of gaseous expansion. By great rarefaction the free path of the molecules is made so long that the hits in a given time may be disregarded in comparison to the misses, in which case the average molecule is allowed to obey its own motion or laws without interference ; and if the mean free path is compatible with the dimensions of the containing vessel, the properties which constitute gaseity are reduced to a minimum, and the matter then becomes exalted to an ultra-gaseous state.

But the same condition of things will be produced if by any means we can take a portion of gas, and by some extraneous force infuse order into the apparently disorderly jostling of the molecules in every direction, by coercing them into a methodical rectilinear movement. This I have shown to be the case in the phenomena which cause the movements of the radiometer, and I have rendered such motion visible in my later researches on the negative discharge in vacuum tubes. In the one case the heated lampblack and in the other the electrically excited negative pole supplies the *force majeure* which entirely or partially changes into a rectilinear motion the irregular vibration in all directions ; and accordidg to the extent to which this onward movement has replaced the irregular motions which constitute the essence of the gaseous condition, to that extent do I consider that the molecules have assumed the condition of radiant matter.

Between the third and the fourth states there is no sharp line of demarcation, any more than there is between the solid and liquid states, or the liquid and gaseous states ; they each merge insensibly one into the other. In the fourth state properties of matter which exist even in the third state are shown *directly*, whereas in the state of gas they are only shown *indirectly*, by viscosity and so forth.

The ordinary laws of gases are a simplification of the effects arising from the properties of matter in the fourth state ; such a simplification is only permissible when the mean length of patch is small compared with the dimensions of the vessel. For simplicity's sake we make abstraction of the individual molecules, and feign to our imagination *continuous* matter, of which the fundamental properties—such as pressure varying as the density, and so forth—are ascertained by experiment. A gas is nothiug more than an assembly of molecules contemplated from a simplified point of view. When we deal with phenomena in which we are obliged to contemplate the molecules individually, we must not speak of the assemblage as *gas*.

These considerations lead to another and curious speculation. The molecule—intangible, invisible, and hard to be conceived—is the only true *matter*, and that which we call matter is nothing more than the effect upon our sense of the movements of molecules, or, as John Stuart Mill expresses it, "a permanent possibility of sensation." The space covered by the motion of molecules has no more right to be called matter than the air traversed by a rifle bullet can be called lead. From this point of view, then, matter is but a mode of motion ; at the absolute zero of temperature the inter-molecular movement would stop, and although *something* retaining the properties of inertia and weight would remain, *matter*, as we know it, would cease to exist.

NOTE BY THE DUKE OF ARGYLE.

In the very interesting communication from Mr. Crookes on "A Fourth State of Matter," which is contained in *Nature*, vol. xxii. p. 153, there is a paragraph at the end which advances, as it seems to me, some most disputable propositions.

Like many other questions of modern science, the question he raises is to a very large extent a question of definition. But questions of definition are questions of the very highest importance in philosophy, and they need to be watched accordingly.