

The discussion of evolution has long since passed the stage when particular facts could be used to prove general conclusions. The difficulty with the current hypotheses of evolution through selection and mutation is that while apparently supported by some facts, they are as definitely contradicted by others; a theory which can accommodate both series of phenomena has a larger basis of probability than either. From the standpoint of the kinetic theory the rejection of selection as the actuating cause or principle of evolution does not require the denial of selective adaptation. The recognition, on the other hand, that mutations are not caused by environment, does not mean that they are definitely predetermined. The abrupt and striking but more or less sterile aberrations of heredity which occur under inbreeding do not show that evolution depends upon segregation. Neither do they afford evidence against the view that evolutionary progress goes forward through the gradual accumulation of lesser and more normal variations, independent of environment, but not beyond selective influence. The kinetic theory affords the explanation, hitherto lacking, of how selection produces adaptation. It does not set stationary organisms in motion, but it may, at times, determine which variation shall most affect the direction of the motion of the species.

O. F. COOK.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
January 14, 1904.

(SCIENCE, N. S., 19: 112, January 15, 1904) that albino mice of mixed ancestry are more prepotent or less recessive than those of pure breed, a result contrary to that which should follow under the pure-germ-cell, character-unit theories of Bateson, Wilson and Castle. The improbability of these mechanical hypotheses was already evident, however, from the fact, known since the time of Darwin, that the crossing of two 'recessive' inbred 'mutations' may bring a return to the ancestral type. The tendency to disregard older data seems to indicate that the recent DeVriesian and Mendelian mutations of terminology are prepotent in closely segregated evolutionary investigations, but the ancestral facts are still vigorous and likely to reassert themselves whenever a wider intercourse of ideas is resumed.

THE ANIMAL PARASITE SUPPOSED TO BE THE  
CAUSE OF YELLOW FEVER.

IN SCIENCE of January 1 there appeared a letter signed H. W. Robinson, which purported to be a defense of one of the members of the working party which I arraigned in my article under the above caption in SCIENCE of October 23, 1903.

In reference to this letter I beg to state that I am not expected to give any attention to what one has to say whose knowledge of the matter is second-hand, but that I am fully prepared to defend whatever I have written in my article, whenever any of the working party answers to my arraignment of its members.

J. C. SMITH.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.,  
January 25, 1904.

SPECIAL ARTICLES.

A FISH NEW TO FLORIDA WATERS.

WHILE dredging off the coast of Florida in 1902, the steamer *Fish Hawk* collected four specimens of a fish whose occurrence in that region was most unexpected and whose known distribution is thus extended in a most interesting direction. The fish in question is the snipe-fish or bellows-fish, *Macrorhamphosus scolopax* (Linnæus), which is common in the Mediterranean and has occasionally been found as far north as the southern coast of England, inhabiting depths up to 170 fathoms. The *Fish Hawk* specimens were taken at two stations in the Gulf Stream off Key West at depths of 98 and 109 fathoms, respectively.

There is one other known occurrence of this fish in American waters, recorded by Storer in the *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History* for 1857 (Vol. VI.), a specimen having been found at Provincetown, Massachusetts.

H. M. SMITH.

NOTE ON A RUBBER-PRODUCING PLANT.

RECENT experiments have shown some interesting facts in regard to the products of *Picradenia odorata utilis*, Ckll., *Bulletin Colo. College Museum*, December, 1903, a plant belonging to the Compositæ and growing abundantly in the neighborhood of Buena