INAUGURAL ADDRESS BEFORE THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.\(^1\)

Under the title 'Darwinism' it is convenient to designate the various work of biologists tending to establish, develop or modify Mr. Darwin's great theory of the origin of species. In looking back over twenty-five years it seems to me that we must say that the conclusions of Darwin as to the origin of species by the survival of selected races in the struggle for existence are more firmly established than ever. And this because there have been many attempts to gravely tamper with essential parts of the fabric as he left it, and even to substitute conceptions for those which he endeavored to establish, at variance with his conclusions. These attempts must, I think, be considered as having failed. A great deal of valuable work has been done in consequence; for honest criticism, based on observation and experiment, leads to further investigation, and is the legitimate and natural mode of increase of scientific knowledge. Amongst the attempts to seriously modify Darwin's doctrine may be cited that to assign a great and leading importance to Lamarck's theory as to the transmission by inheritance of newly 'acquired' characters, due chiefly to American paleontologists and to the venerated defender of such views, who has now closed his long life of great work, Mr. Herbert Spencer; that to attribute leading importance to the action of physiological con-

\(^1\) Concluding part of the address given by Dr. E. Ray Lankester, at York, on August 1, 1906.
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