

# SCIENCE

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## CONTENTS

<i>Irreversible Differentiation and Orthogenesis:</i> PROFESSOR C. JUDSON HERRICK .....	621
<i>Educational Institutions represented in the Mellon Institute:</i> W. A. HAMOR .....	625
<i>Scientific Events:—</i>	
<i>The Cardiff Meeting of the British Association; The English Deep-sea Fisheries; The Sixth Exposition of Chemical Industries; The Work of the National Committee on Mathematical Requirements; The Elliot Medal in Zoology and Paleontology</i> .....	627
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i> .....	630
<i>University and Educational News</i> .....	633
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>The Use of the Term Fossil:</i> PROFESSOR RICHARD M. FIELD. <i>The Fixation of Atmospheric Nitrogen:</i> DR. CHARLES A. DOREMUS .....	634
<i>Current Research and Publication in the American Museum of Natural History:</i> DR. HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN .....	636
<i>Notes on Meteorology and Climatology:—</i>	
<i>The Effect of Snow upon the Growth of Winter Wheat:</i> C. LEROY MEISINGER .....	639
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>Transference of Nematodes from Place to Place for Economic Purposes:</i> DR. N. A. COBB. <i>The Interaction of Ethylene and Sulphuryl Chloride:</i> WILLIAM FOSTER ....	640
<i>The American Philosophical Society:</i> PROFESSOR ARTHUR W. GOODSPEED .....	642

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## IRREVERSIBLE DIFFERENTIATION AND ORTHOGENESIS

THE publication in 1919 of the three noble volumes of posthumous works of the late Professor Whitman<sup>1</sup> redirects our attention to the problem of orthogenetic evolution. The evidence here presented may be regarded as demonstrative that in pigeons variations do not occur in all cases at random around fixed modes as unit characters in accordance with the laws of probability, but that they tend to appear in the course of phylogeny in an irreversible series.

Numerous other students of evolution have formulated similar conceptions under the names, orthogenesis, orthoplasia, directive evolution, etc., some of which are referred to by Whitman, and others are cited at length by Baldwin in his book on "Development and Evolution" (New York, 1902). Most of these statements leave much to be desired from the scientific standpoint and they frequently lead to the expressed or implied postulation of metaphysical factors.<sup>2</sup> Nägeli's principle of perfection is of this sort and has not been especially fruitful. Others, like Eimer,<sup>3</sup> though basing their conclusions on extensive critical observation, have allowed themselves to be swept along by controversial

<sup>1</sup> "Orthogenetic Evolution in Pigeons." Posthumous Works of Charles Otis Whitman. Edited by Oscar Riddle. Published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> The term orthogenesis has been applied in a great variety of senses, some of them decidedly mystical. These are summarized by Vernon L. Kellogg in "Darwinism To-day," New York, 1907, pp. 274-288.

<sup>3</sup> Eimer's Leyden address published by The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1898, under the title, "On Orthogenesis and the Impotence of Natural Selection in Species-Formation," gives a summary of his views with citation of the original sources of his data.

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