

# The Midwife.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE RACE.

Sir James Barr, in his presidential address to the Liverpool Heredity Society at their annual meeting at the Royal Institution in that city on October 21st, and reported in the *Liverpool Mercury*, laid down the principle that to raise a nation morally, intellectually, and physically, selective breeding was the only way, and that those who depended solely on environment were resting on a broken reed.

### A PARADOX OF BREEDING.

The laws of Mendel, he said, were revolutionising many of our previous ideas of heredity, and had upset many of the Darwinian hypotheses concerning the origin of species. They showed that the evolution of the race did not arise from any fortuitous concatenation of circumstances, but followed definite laws. The great law of Mendel consisted in the dissociation of the ultimate factors which gave rise to the characters of the individual, in the germ, and their segregation in the union gametes of the parents, which went to form the zygote or offspring. It was highly probable that the determination of sex itself might eventually be found to be due to such segregation. From the fact that the development of characters in animals or plants depended on the presence of definite units or factors in their germ cells, there followed the paradox that an organism might be pure-bred in respect of a given character, though its parents were cross-bred in the same respect.

### PROBLEMS OF BLOOD TRANSFUSION.

Human families were small compared with many of the lower animals, and the period covered by each generation so long that no observer could examine many, but, so far as observation had been carried out, inheritance followed Mendelian lines. Once a character was formed it could be perpetuated on Mendelian lines. It had been discovered that human blood could be arranged into four broad groups, according to the serum and red cells. In the war there were plenty of opportunities of transfusing blood, but it was soon found that the blood of some donors destroyed that of the recipients, and, therefore, it became necessary to find out the group to which each belonged.

In Liverpool, Professor Glynn had a list of

willing donors who were ready to part with their blood when required, so when any case occurred requiring blood transfusion he found out the group to which the individual belonged and then he called upon the corresponding donor. These groups occurred in all races, so that the blood of the most exclusive blue-blooded aristocrats might be renovated by the blood of a negro. Perhaps a little greater discrimination could be desired. In America it had been found that these types of blood were transmitted in accordance with the Mendelian laws of inheritance. Hence these tests had been accepted in the law courts in cases of disputed paternity.

## MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

### MILK GRANT.

In the House of Commons on October 20th questions were addressed to the Minister of Health concerning his decision to reduce the Government financial aid to Local Authorities for the provision of milk to infants and mothers. Viscountess Astor, M.P., enquired whether he could reconsider the matter so as to give once again half the cost in cases where the Medical Officer to the Local Authority issues a certificate of need, or where some other suitable safeguard against unnecessary expenditure is provided. Mr. Myers, M.P., asked the Minister whether, having regard to the good work which has been and is being done by the service, and the reduction of the infantile death rate which it has effected, he would withdraw the circular reducing the State Grant for milk for necessitous cases, under maternity and infant welfare regulations, from 50 to 5 per cent., and Captain Coote, M.P., after pointing out that the reduction coincides with the beginning of winter, when milk is dearest, and with widespread distress owing to unemployment, whether the economy to be effected can be secured in a less disastrous way.

Sir A. Mond said in reply: "The very great increase in this service by local authorities has caused the estimate of the Government grant during the financial year already to be exceeded, and on strictly financial grounds severe reduction is entirely justified. But in view of the commitments of local authorities during this financial year and the distress existing from the extent of unemployment I have decided that the 50 per cent. grant for milk supplied free or at less than cost price under the conditions laid down in Circular 185 will be continued until the end of the financial year."

This decision of the Minister of Health will be received with a feeling of widespread relief.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)