

Dear Sir

Jan. 4. 1884

I am well pleased to see, in the *Anchor Review*, that you regard my book on *Heredity* worthy of careful examination, and I should be still more pleased if you could put me in the way to test my views by experiments with plants.

If I were master of my own time I should be glad to come to Cambridge and work upon the subject under the instruction of Prof. Goodale, but I have work in another field which takes all my time.

As the notice in the *Review* is a criticism as well as a notice, I hope you will allow me to say a few words on some of the points.

I quite agree with you that the word "*reproduction*" is better than the word "*heredity*" as I have used it, at least for students.

When I wrote my title page I had in mind a book entitled "*What Young People Ought to Know*" and I, in my desire to keep sex off the covers, and to avoid any thing sensational, I chose "*heredity*" in place of "*reproduction*" for you know that zoologists are not permitted to talk in public, like botanists, about sexual matters.

As regards your point that I have made the word embrace the phenomena of variation, you must remember that the aim of the book is to show that new characteristics - variations - are inherited from the parent, through the fertilized egg, like established characteristics, and that inheritance of the former is, as truly heredity, as inheritance of the latter.

The maximum being in the one case the male cell, and in the other the egg.

I am surprised that you should have found, in the book, a passage which seems to have teleological or anti-teleological implications, as I made every effort to so word it as to avoid any thing of the sort. It did not seem either necessary or pertinent to make a formal statement that the book is not a discussion of natural theology, although I did make the statement that "as we enter upon the subject it will be well to bear in mind the wide difference between the end we have in view - the discovery of the secondary laws of heredity - and the attempt to understand its ultimate ~~cause~~ cause," and the sentence which directly follows the one you quote states that we cannot perfectly understand the mechanism of an animal. The sentence you quote was carefully written, and I am greatly obliged to you for printing it out, but and I may say to you that I have carefully read the whole of your article with profit to myself.

In one case I think that I may claim misrepresentation, or at least something much like it. After certain quotations you state that "This is very fine, in more than one sense of the word, but it is not quite what we mean by exact science," and I think that we can well perceive, from the context, that the passages thus commented on are not those <sup>views</sup> of the author of the book.

Yours Respectfully  
W. K. Brooks

Prof. A. A. Gray  
Cambridge Mass



Brooks, William Keith. 1884. "Brooks, William K. Jan. 4, 1884." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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