

**ARE THE EFFECTS OF USE AND
DISUSE INHERITED? AN
EXAMINATION OF THE VIEW
HELD BY SPENCER AND DARWIN**

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WILLIAM PLATT BALL

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ARE THE EFFECTS OF USE AND
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*AN EXAMINATION OF THE VIEW HELD BY
SPENCER AND DARWIN*

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WILLIAM PLATT BALL

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PREFACE.

MY warmest thanks are due to Mr. Francis Darwin, to Mr. E. B. Poulton (whose interest in the subject here discussed is shown by his share in the translation of Weismann's *Essays on Heredity*), and to Professor Romanes, for the help afforded by their kindly suggestions and criticisms, and for the advice and recommendation under which this essay is now published. Encouragement from Mr. Francis Darwin is to me the more precious, and the more worthy of grateful recognition, from the fact that my general conclusion that acquired characters are *not* inherited is

at variance with the opinion of his revered father, who aided his great theory by the retention of some remains of Lamarck's doctrine of the inherited effect of habit. I feel as if the son, as representative of his great progenitor, were carrying out the idea of an appreciative editor who writes to me: "We must say that if Darwin were still alive, he would find your arguments of great weight, and undoubtedly would give to them the serious consideration which they deserve." I hope, then, that I may be acquitted of undue presumption in opposing a view sanctioned by the author of the *Origin of Species*, but already stoutly questioned and firmly rejected by such followers of his as Weismann, Wallace, Poulton, Ray Lankester, and others, to say nothing of its practical rejection by so great an authority on heredity as Francis Galton.

The sociological importance of the subject has already been insisted on in emphatic terms by