It may be affirmed with much truth that if we wish to learn what pursuit ranks highest in public opinion, we shall find it in the career of those men to whom statues are erected by public subscription. It happened that the writer of these lines not long since revisited Cambridge, where, as he walked admiringly among the many new improvements in the city, his eye was arrested by a bronze statue. It was the only out-of-doors statue in the whole town; it occupied a commanding position in the market-place, hard by the University Church, and only a few steps from being in full sight of the Senate House. He walked reverently up to it, pondering as he went as to the manner of the man whose memory it so proudly perpetuated, and lo! it was Mr. Jonas Webb of Babraham, the famous breeder of Southdown sheep. The erection of this statue by the agriculturists of a county in whose capital a great university happens to be located, is worthy of note. It expresses their genuine appreciation of the practical application of the laws of heredity to all descriptions of farm produce, and it may be accepted as an omen that the time is near when the study of those laws and of their logical consequences shall permeate the philosophy of the university. It must do so, because there is no branch of science which refers to bodily structure or to mental aptitudes, neither is there any theological doctrine in which the theory of heredity, either directly or as one of the principal agents in evolution, can hereafter be left out of consideration.

In the course of formation of every science there has always been an embryonic or pre-scientific period. Nothing then existed but detached pieces of evidence, of an unsatisfactory kind, l&y discussed and explained by wild hypotheses. But, at length, the methods of science succeeded in catching with a firm grip some of the loose materials, then more was seized, and so, with an ever-increasing rapidity of conquest, the whole of them became gathered together within the pale of law. Heredity has at the present time developed into a science; much is determined, and many questions seem to require for their solution little more than direct experiment or the simple but careful collection of statistical facts. There is consequently some need of a work that shall concisely and clearly set forth what is already known and what are the undecided questions which most urgently call for solution, and might at the same time be solved by any person, who chose to devote a fair amount of intelligent and steady work to the purpose.

M. Ribot's book does not do this; it is not a work on a level with the present knowledge, but it takes up the subject of scientific stage of heredity. It again brings to the light old anecdotes of questionable value, and again treats with seriousness, hypotheses that have become obsolete. Speaking generally, the work is that of a partially infirmed and very speculative writer, and by no means that of a man of science. It is written in a somewhat pretentious style, which has the effect of making the reader believe that some great discovery is about to be announced, and of fixing his attention until he reaches the end, when the declared hope and not to be realized. As examples of the kind of information which he freely accepts as evidence—among the illustrations of longevity, we are told that "a collier in Scotland prolonged his hard and dreary existence over one hundred and thirty-three years." We next have, as an example of exceedingly acute sense, a long account of a study Lucas, who was perhaps the most crooked and uncertain of the times, of the sword Duncans, of which there was much too credulous of wonderful stories, of "Hirsch Daenemark, a Polish Jew, who about the year 1840 travelled over Europe, showing by decisive experiments that he could read in a closed book any page or line that might be desired.;" and of his son, aged one, who "possessed an extraordinary memory, and perhaps a more remarkable degree." Curiously enough, I happen to know something about this very case, which was mentioned to me two years ago as an avowed instance of extraordinary memory. The subject of hereditary memory was and is of interest to me, and I therefore wrote to a very eminent and learned Jew, to whom I was referred for information. His reply lies before me: I do not repeat the names in his letter, as I did not ask permission to do so. This is an extract from it: The feat which you describe is one of those which are only known to the Jewish rabbis who study the Talmud. It is called the 'Sibas Pole'. —i.e., the Talmud Pole ('Sibas' being composed of the initial letters of the Hebrew words meaning 'the six sections' of the Talmud), and who, travelling through the principal parts of Europe about the year 1848, astonished even such men as — in Berlin, — in Prague, and — in Padua. He was not only able to tell the words which a pin thrust through one leaf in any part of the Talmud would pass on the next, but on any number of subsequent leaves. In fact, he seems to have had in his work (thirty-six volumes) more or less by heart, through the aid of a local as well as verbal memory of wonderful power, devoted to that end only. My correspondent gave me particulars of another instance of extraordinary memory of the same kind that existed in his own family. A boy aged five, who was seven years old, could say by heart the whole of the Pentateuch in Hebrew, verse by verse, together with the remarks of the principal commentators, Farihi, Ebn Ezra, and Rabbi; and throughout his life—he died aged seventy-seven—his knowledge of the Talmudical and Rabbinical literature was such that he was constantly appealed to for pointing out the sources of obscure references or allusions; and, in fact, he never seemed to forget anything—whether places, persons, facts, or ideas—with which he had once become acquainted. I have reason to believe, that in this respect, exact in all matters of detail, is a characteristic of the Jewish race. M. Ribot says there is a lack of evidence to prove the heredity of strong memory; on the contrary, I find it abundant. It existed, as we have just been informed, in the family of Hirsch Daenemark, to whom the evidence of my correspondent. But to proceed with M. Ribot's book, he quotes Le Vaillant on the half-bred children of the Europeans and Hottentots, that the moral nature is always determined by the father. When the father is a Hottentot, the child is always gentle, and kindly affection of the father; but, in the converse case, they have "the germs of all vices and unrelentless passions." (1) Again.
he quotes, apparently with perfect approval, the opinion "that there is an invariable connexion between the heredity of physical resemblance and the heredity of moral resemblance. I can only say that I have been so struck by the number of cases in which the mother as well as the father were affected, and when neither parent had not the character, that I should hardly be surprised if they proved to be the more numerous; but I have never as yet gone statistically into this question. Then he indulges in some absurd views about likeness descending through opposite sexes, and says that the son is more like his mother, and, through her, to his grandfather, than he is to his father.

The inaccuracy and feebleness of his deductions is, in many instances, very striking. Here is one which is perfectly inexcusable in a writer on heredity: he is speaking of the transmission of acquired habits, and uses an often published anecdote to prove his case. He says:

"Habit is defined to be an acquired disposition. We ask if any purely individual habits are transmitted? In answer to this, M. Giro de Buzareingue observes that he had known a man who had the habit, when in bed, of lying on his back and crossing the right leg over the left. One of his daughters had the same habit from birth."

The only meaning to be attached to this is, that the man had no special instinct to cross his legs, that from some cause or other he did so, that he acquired the habit of doing so, and that he transmitted this acquired habit by inheritance to his daughter. But what possible right has anyone to infer from the story, as it is told, that the man's habit was not just as instinctive as that of his daughter? Everybody who knows anything of heredity is well aware that one of the most interesting questions at the present time concerns the possibility of transmitting acquired habits. There are some few, very few, well-known instances of it in animals, but hardly any in man, while there are a vast number of cases in which acquired habits are, on the contrary, most assiduously transmitted in any recognisable degree. The question is of extreme interest in its bearing upon the rate and direction of evolution, and therefore every bit of evidence about it deserves the closest scrutiny; but M. Ribot passes completely on, careless and unconscious.

It is necessary to draw serious attention to the large amount of unacknowledged plagiarism which characterises this book. M. Ribot has been immensely indebted for its general design, and for very many facts, to the well-known work of Dr. Prosper Lucas, Héritage Naturelle, as the reader will sufficiently recognise by comparing the two tables of contents, but I myself am aggrieved yet more directly. I find the tables and genealogies that I had compiled, after very considerable research and sitting, and which I published in Heredity Gentile, Appropriated without a word of acknowledgment. They are clipped and condensed, and a trifling number of names are varied, but that is all, and M. Ribot thinks fit to give this plagiarised version of the families of the principal poets, painters, musicians, men of science and of literature, statesmen, and commanders, ex-