

Co-adaptation.

It sometimes appears to me that the neo-Darwinians must speak a language of their own, because they are so fond of telling me, in a stereotyped phrase, that, "if words have any meaning," such and such words have expressed some meaning which no ordinary grammatical construction can extract. The present is a good case in point. Prof. Meldola says that he finds "a remarkable discrepancy" between my two previous letters on the above subject, and seeks to reveal it by quoting from the first letter, thus:—

"I do not . . . hold myself responsible for enunciating Mr. Herbert Spencer's argument, which the quotation sets forth. I merely reproduced it from him as an argument which appeared to me valid on the side of "use-inheritance." For not only did Darwin himself invoke the aid of such inheritance in regard to this identical case, . . . ' &c. If words have any meaning, this implies that Dr. Romanes agrees with Darwin in regarding this case as one in which 'use-inheritance' played a part."

Does it? When a man says that in his opinion a certain argument in favour of a certain conclusion is valid, is this equivalent to his saying that he accepts the conclusion? And when he adds, twice over, that he purposely abstains from expressing any opinion of his own with regard to the conclusion, is this equivalent to his saying the precise opposite?

The state of the case is simply as follows. Prof. Meldola reproduced Mr. Wallace's argument against Mr. Spencer's defence of "use-inheritance." I wrote to show that this particular argument was invalid; but that there was another argument on the same side, which, if adduced, would be valid, *supposing that it could be sustained by facts*. Now, in his reply, Prof. Meldola abandoned the invalid argument, and adopted the one which I had stated. Accordingly I wrote a second time, in order to show that we were then agreed upon this being the only argument which could be logically brought against Mr. Spencer's position. But I again added that I would express no opinion as to whether this argument could be successful in subverting Mr. Spencer's position. In point of fact, with regard to *this* question I have no fully-formed opinion to express. But, unless the neo-Darwinians have eventually become unable to comprehend the attitude of "suspended judgment," one would suppose that they might still appreciate the difference between sifting arguments as good or bad on both sides of a question, and finally deciding with regard to the question itself.

Christ Church, Oxford, May 8. GEORGE J. ROMANES.