As such difficulties were brought out in the course of the discussion, Darwin began making additions to his theory or thinking of new ideas to explain how variations came into existence. In the third edition of The Origin of Species he inserted what he called "a historical account" in which he dismissed Lamarck's ideas as merely a part of the history of error. Yet in edition after edition of the Origin he kept making additional concessions or adopting various features of Lamarckianism. The dean of the graduate school of one of our greatest universities said recently that if a lesser man had made such alterations without indicating in any way that he was changing his view he would be suspected of dishonesty. A strong admirer of Darwin declares: "The number of these concealed contradictions makes the later editions of the Origin instructive but difficult reading. For clarity and reasonable consistency the first edition is by far the most satisfactory."

Only a few years after the appearance of The Origin of Species Darwin attempted to solve the problem of the origin of variations by presenting a new hypothesis. In 1868 he published a book entitled, The Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication, containing a theory that he called "pangenesis." According to this theory every part of the body is constantly producing "gemmules," which move to the generative organs, so that these organs are constantly affected by any change in the body. Thus any change in the condition or use of any part of the body would directly affect the next generation.

Belief in the existence of such "gemmules" was soon abandoned. Eventually most scientists became convinced that acquired characteristics are not inherited. The germ plasm is passed on untouched by changes in the other organs of the body. So long as the germ plasm itself has not been injured or directly affected, the condition of the next generation will not be altered by activities or experiences of the parent. Darwin's theory of pangenesis has been universally discarded.