FACTS LIMITING THE THEORY OF HEREDITY

My first duty is to acknowledge the honor done me by the suggestion that I should deliver the address in this section. I need not say that I very highly appreciate the distinction thus conferred.

The fact that a heredity section has been constituted is surely a matter for congratulation. It is a sign that the study of zoology is passing into a maturer stage. For the past half century zoologists have been chiefly occupied with the accumulation of morphological facts of structure and development. The perfection of microscopical methods had revealed regions in which knowledge could be readily advanced by simple means. We became, therefore, students of Céleterata, insects, Vertebrata, or whatever it might be, according as fancy or opportunity had specially attracted us to one or other of these groups.

Such work was interim work. It was making up arrears. This task is now practically accomplished. Almost all that can be seen by these simple means has been seen. One more phase is over. The division of our subject matter according to the groups of the animal kingdom is no longer adequate.

We are trying for fresh points of attack. Our forces are disposing themselves in new formations, with fresh centers and a new front. In the organization of the present congress the change has been recognized.

1 Address delivered at the International Zoological Congress, before the Section of Cytology and Heredity, August 23, 1907.