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## Original Communications.

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### Hereditv and Environment, Beginning with the Primordial Cell.\*

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It has been said, "The child is father to the man," and that if we would comprehend a character, we must trace his birth, his surroundings, the method of his growth, the forces that have shaped him and made him what he is.

The past is fixed; the future lies before us like the block of rough marble before the sculptor. It can be shaped into beautiful designs according to his tastes and fancies, or left untouched with all its beauty and usefulness undeveloped.

The famous inscription of the Oracle of Delphi said, "Man, know thyself." And to do this thoroughly, we have not only to know ourselves but our ancestors as well, and the best way to do this is to begin at the very commencement of life, the primordial cell or germ. We shall then be able to get at the root of health and disease—heredity and environment—the latter two factors having a great deal to do with man's proper development, happiness and misery.

In order that we may properly comprehend the great importance of heredity, it will be necessary to review some of the elementary principles of organic and inorganic nature.

The verdict of modern thought is almost unanimous in asserting that there was a time when the material universe was in a chaotic state—that it was without form; in other words, in a nebulous

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\* I am indebted to Prof. Huxley and Dr. Holmes for many valuable ideas in this paper.