

clined to look upon as the products of a creative power, acting for a definite purpose, we, according to the Theory of Selection, can conceive as the necessary productions of natural selection, working without a purpose,—as the unconscious interaction between the two properties of Mutability and Hereditivity. Considering the importance which accordingly belongs to these vital properties of organisms, we must examine them a little more closely, and employ a chapter with the consideration of Transmission by Inheritance.

Strictly speaking, we must distinguish between Hereditivity (Transmissivity) and Inheritance (Transmission). Hereditivity is the power of transmission, the capability of organisms to transfer their peculiarities to their descendants by propagation. Transmission by Inheritance, or Inheritance simply, on the other hand, denotes the exercise of the capability, the actual transmission.

Hereditivity and Transmission by Inheritance are such universal, everyday phenomena, that most people do not heed them, and but few are inclined to reflect upon the operation and import of these phenomena of life. It is generally thought quite natural and self-evident that every organism should produce its like, and that children should more or less resemble their parents. Heredity is usually only taken notice of and discussed in cases relating to some special peculiarity, which appears for the first time in a human individual without having been inherited and then is transmitted to his descendants. It shows itself in a specially striking manner in the case of certain diseases, and in unusual and irregular (monstrous) deviations from the usual formation of the body.