

SCIENCE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, PUBLISHING THE
OFFICIAL NOTICES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1908

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SOME OF THE PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS OF BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY *

DURING the past few decades there has been gradually developing in the biological world a clearer recognition of the importance of a study of function, coupled with a fuller appreciation of the great diversity of the processes characteristic of life. It has come to be the fashion for naturalists—who up to comparatively recent times were content mainly to study form and structure—to turn their attention to observation of function, to learn how and why certain things are accomplished. Each decade has witnessed a broadening of the point of view; in botany, zoology, paleontology and geology new methods of investigation have been gradually applied, new relationships have been established, and the study of life, past and present, has taken on a new and broader significance. The Mendelian law and the present theories of genetics; the facts of modern cytology and the theories of heredity consequent thereto; the present-day experiments in breeding and variation with the conclusions to be drawn therefrom; the modern methods and theories of physiology in general; are the natural outcome of a progressive scientific activity where the study of function has come to occupy a prominent position and where the experi-

* Address of the president of the American Society of Biological Chemists and chairman of the Biological Section of the American Chemical Society, at the joint meeting in Chicago, January 1, 1908.

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