

employing the empirical results of embryology, palæontology, and anatomy for supplementing each other, we arrive at an approximate knowledge of "the Natural System," which, according to our views, is the *pedigree* of organisms. It is true that our human knowledge, in all things fragmentary, is especially so in this case, on account of the extreme incompleteness and defectiveness of the records of creation. However, we must not allow this to discourage us, or to deter us from undertaking this highest problem of biology. Let us rather see how far it may even now be possible, in spite of the imperfect state of our embryological, palæontological, and anatomical knowledge, to establish a probable scheme of the genealogical relationships of organisms.

Darwin in his book gives us no answer to these special questions of the Theory of Descent; at the conclusion he only expresses his conjecture "that animals have descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or less number." But as these few aboriginal forms still show traces of relationship, and as the animal and vegetable kingdoms are connected by intermediate transitional forms, he arrives afterwards at the opinion "that probably all the organic beings which have ever lived on the earth have descended from some one primordial form, into which life was first breathed by the Creator." Like Darwin, all other adherents of the Theory of Descent have only treated it in a general way, and not made the attempt to carry it out specially, and to treat the "Natural System" actually as the pedigree of organisms. If, therefore, we venture upon this difficult undertaking, we must take up independent ground.