

THE HISTORY OF OUR SPECIES

(the theory of the descent of man from the ape) there now arose the difficult task of investigating, not only the nearest related mammal ancestors of man in the Tertiary epoch, but also the long series of the older animal ancestors which had lived in earlier periods of the earth's history and been developed in the course of countless millions of years. I had made a start with the hypothetical solution of this great historic problem in my *General Morphology*; a further development of it appeared in 1874 in my *Anthropogeny* (first section, Origin of the Individual; second section, Origin of the Race). The fourth, enlarged, edition of this work (1891) contains that theory of the development of man which approaches nearest, in my own opinion, to the still remote truth, in the light of our present knowledge of the documentary evidence. I was especially pre-occupied in its composition to use the three empirical "documents"—palæontology, ontogeny, and morphology (or comparative anatomy)—as evenly and harmoniously as possible. It is true that my hypotheses were in many cases supplemented and corrected in detail by later phylogenetic research; yet I am convinced that the ancestral tree of human origin which I have sketched therein is substantially correct. For the historical succession of vertebrate fossils corresponds completely with the morphological evolutionary scale which is revealed to us by comparative anatomy and ontogeny. After the Silurian fishes come the *dipnoi* of the Devonian period—the Carboniferous amphibia, the Permian reptilia, and the Mesozoic mammals. Of these, again, the lowest forms, the monotremes, appear first in the Triassic period, the marsupials in the Jurassic, and then the oldest placentals in the Cretaceous. Of the placentals, in turn, the first to appear in the oldest Ter-