Greater and more frequent difficulties arise if we penetrate further into the most remote part of the human phylogeny, and attempt to derive the vertebrate stem from an older stem of invertebrate ancestors. None of those had a skeleton which could be petrified; and the same remark applies to the lowest classes of Vertebrata—to the Cyclostomes and the Acrania. Palæontology, therefore, can tell us nothing about them; and we are limited to the other two great documents of phylogeny—the results of comparative anatomy and ontogeny. The value of their evidence is, however, so great that every competent zoologist can perceive the most important features of the most remote portion of our phylogeny.

Here the first place belongs to the invaluable results which modern comparative ontogeny has gained by the aid of the biogenetic law or the theory of recapitulation. The foundation-stones of vertebrate embryology had been laid by the works of Von