

with true morphological insight at the lower Cryptogams, Algæ in particular; and both as a pre-Darwinian and an anti-Darwinian he is of great interest in the history of evolution theories.

Although the study of the development of plants had been well begun by Wolff, Brown, and Schleiden, the history of the flowering plant's embryo was ^{Comparative Embryology.} still obscure, and the development of flowerless plants or Cryptogams was in great part unknown. In other words, botany was awaiting its Von Baer who should establish comparative embryology. The credit of achieving this rests mainly with Wilhelm Hofmeister.

From 1849 onwards Hofmeister published a brilliant series of researches, in which he worked out the early stages in the development of both flowering and flowerless plants, and, much more than that, unified no small part of the whole by detecting the alternation of generations which dominates a long series of plants from liverworts to Dicotyledons. "The results", Sachs says, "of the investigations published in the *Vergleichende Untersuchungen*, in 1849 and 1851, were magnificent beyond all that has been achieved before or since in the domain of descriptive botany" . . . "the idea of what is meant by the development of a plant was suddenly and completely changed" . . . "alternation of generations, lately shown to exist, though in quite different forms, in the animal kingdom, was proved to be the highest law of development, and to reign according to a simple scheme throughout a long series of extremely different plants" . . . "the reader was presented with a picture of genetic affinity between Cryptogams and Phanerogams, which could not be reconciled with the then reigning belief in the constancy of species" . . . "what Hæckel, after the appearance of Darwin's book, called the phylogenetic method, Hofmeister had long before actually carried out, and with magnificent success."

It need hardly be said that some of the finest morphological work of the Victorian era has been inspired by, and founded on, Hofmeister's remarkable achievements.