## THE DEVELOPMENT THEORY; A BRIEF STATEMENT FOR GENERAL READERS

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The Development Theory; A Brief Statement for General Readers by Jr. Bergen & Fanny D. Bergen

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## JR. BERGEN & FANNY D. BERGEN

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## DEVELOPMENT THEORY

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### BRIEF STATEMENT FOR GENERAL READERS

BY JOSEPH Y. BERGEN, JR.

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### PREFACE.

IN the preparation of this elementary book on a great subject, the authors have tried to meet what seems to them to be a real need.

To very many thinkers the development theory is the great scientific generalization of the century. Even if it should ever come to appear something less than this, none will dispute the fact that the theory has furnished an incalculable stimulus to the thought of to-day. Yet how few, except special students of the natural or of the physical sciences, really know what is meant by organic evolution ! Ask the average graduate of a high school, an academy, or even of one of our minor colleges, to state his conception of the theory. One is ashamed to quote the ready but unmeaning reply, which not seldom would be, "Oh! I know only that Darwin thought we are descended from monkeys."

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#### PREFACE.

As well might Newton's theory of gravitation be summed up in the statement that all the heavenly bodies are held in place on the same principle as beads strung on a thread.

The influence of the doctrine of descent is so far-reaching, that every intelligent reader should certainly have so fair a notion of its meaning as to be able, in some measure, personally to test its sufficiency as an explanation of the present condition of the organic world, by applying it to the study of the forms of life about him.

By reason of their very fulness and wealth of illustration, as well as from the necessarily frequent use of technical terms, the classic works of Darwin and the other great founders of the modern view of the origin of species fail to command the attention of the non-scientific reader. The lack of simple and inexpensive illustrated books, which place the outline of the evolution hypothesis clearly before the general reader, has aided in continuing popular ignorance concerning the theory. To assist in supplying this want, as well as to furnish to those who require it an elementary text-book on the subject, is the task which the authors of the present little volume have set for themselves.

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#### PREFACE.

Not much in the book is original, except the form in which the facts are presented and some of the examples cited.

To avoid what might have sounded like the editorial we, the authors, when speaking in the first person, have throughout used the singular number of the pronoun.

Technical terms have, as far as possible, been avoided, and every thing else has been made secondary to the general purpose of presenting a simple sketch of what Haeckel so well calls "The Natural History of Creation."

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