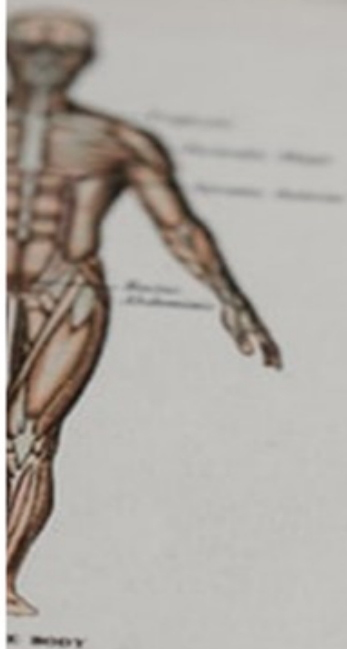
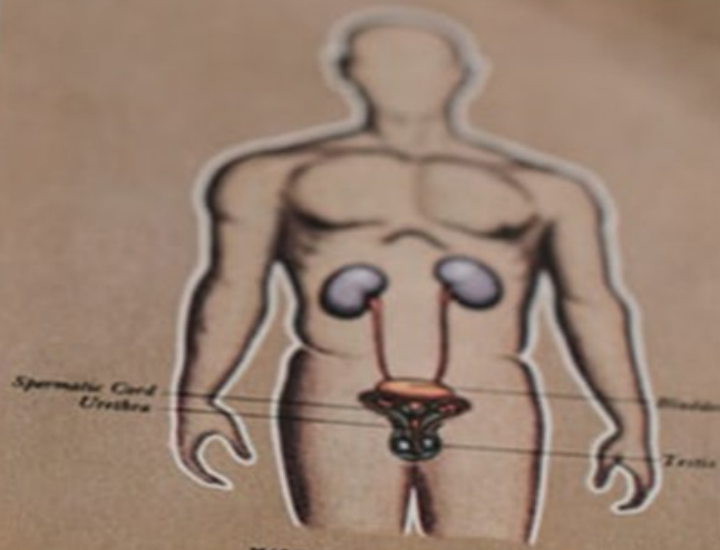


***E. RAY SIR
LANKESTER***



THE BODY



MALE GENITO-URINARY SYSTEM

***DEGENERATION:
A CHAPTER
IN DARWINISM***

E. Ray Sir Lankester

Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism

EAN 8596547216681

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEGENERATION.

DEGENERATION.

A.

B.

C.

D.

DEGENERATION.

[Table of Contents](#)

DEGENERATION.

[Table of Contents](#)

It is the misfortune of those who study that branch of science which our President has done so much to advance—I mean the science of living things—that they are not able, in the midst of a vast assembly,^[1] to render visible to all eyes the actual phenomena to which their inquiries are directed. Whilst the physicist and the chemist are able to make evident to the senses of a great meeting the very things of which they have to tell, the zoologist cannot hope ever to share with those who form his audience the keen pleasure of observing a new or beautiful organism; he cannot demonstrate by means of actual specimens the delicate arrangements of structure which it is his business to record, and upon which he bases his conclusions. It is for this reason that he who would bring to the notice of laymen some matter which at the moment is occupying the attention of biological students, must appear to be unduly devoted to speculation—hypothesis—to support which he cannot produce the facts themselves but merely the imperfect substitutes afforded by pictures. It is perhaps not altogether a matter for regret that there should be in one great branch of science, as there is in biology, so very marked a disproportion between the facilities for

demonstrating facts and the general interest attaching to the theories connected with those facts. We may be thankful that at the present day we are not likely, in the domain of biology, to make the mistake (which has been made under other circumstances) of substituting the mere inspection and cataloguing of natural objects for that more truly scientific attitude which consists in assigning the facts which come under our observation to their causes, or, in other words, to their places in the order of nature. Though we may rightly object to the attempt which is sometimes made to decry the modern teachings of biology as not being “exact science,” yet we may boldly admit the truth of the assertion that we biologists are largely occupied with speculations, hypotheses, and other products of the imagination. All true science deals with speculation and hypothesis, and acknowledges as its most valued servant—its indispensable ally and help-meet—that which our German friends[\[2\]](#) call “Phantasie” and we “the Imagination.” Our science—biology—is not less exact; our conclusions are no less accurate because they are only *probably* true. They are “probably true” with a degree of probability of which we are fully aware, and which is only *somewhat* less than the probability attaching to the conclusions of other sciences which are commonly held to be “exact.”

These remarks are addressed to an Association for the advancement of science—of science which flourishes and progresses by the aid of suppositions and the working of the imagination. The Association has been holding its annual sitting in various parts of the British Islands for more than