Richard Semon Encyclopedia Article

Richard Semon

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Richard Semon

1859-1918

German zoologist who developed a Lamarckian view of heredity that was influential in the early twentieth century, but was later discredited. He was heavily influenced by Ernst Haeckel, under whom he began his biological studies in Jena in 1879. Semon never received a full professorship, so after various biological expeditions and teaching positions, he became a private scholar. His most important book was *Mneme* (1904), a book arguing that an organism's heredity can be influenced by acquired characteristics.