

No address to a Naturalist Society, even of so slight a nature as this must necessarily be, can pass by in silence the questions raised by such papers as Mr. Crowfoot's on "Spontaneous Generation," Mr. Barrett's on "Coast Insects found Inland," and still less the remarkable issue of Darwin's "Descent of Man." That such frail species of Noctuæ should have preserved their identity unchanged during the long period which must have elapsed since Brandon was a coast line, and the changes involved in that alteration, though small compared with some of the periods Geologists speak of, opens the eye to the immensity of time that may be required, whether for formation of a new, for a slight variation of existing, or for the extinction of an old species. Personally I do not consider the facts so brought to our knowledge go further than to make us realize the lapse of time and extent of change of conditions required for such development of new or actual extinction of former genera; but it gives great force to an observation made to the Liverpool Society, that though we may regret the loss of rare plants, insects and birds from the few localities where they linger, whether by accident, agricultural changes, or by reckless collectors, yet the fact of such extinction or non-extinction is itself a valuable one for natural science, and an important point to be carefully noted, as much almost as the discovery of a new species. Without entering on the unsettled questions of the origin of species, or discussing the probable truth or error of my old teacher, Dr. Grant's maxim—for to him it is originally due—that the whole creation, from the monad to man, proceeded from a cell on which was impressed the potentiality of development; and without venturing to follow Professor Tyndall into the tremendous vision that all poetry, science, eloquence, and genius, existed potentially in the fire mist of primeval cosmical conditions, of which the sun's photo and chromo spheres may be the relics, I may be allowed to draw atten-

tion to the wonderful variety and extent of learning and observation in Dr. Darwin's last book. He calls it the "Descent" of Man, rather, as has been well said, it is the "Ascent" of Man. If—though I do not say he has succeeded, but if he has proved that man is in body developed from some hairy, sharp-eared arboreal quadruped, some of us will be made to remember our classic reading of Dryads, Hamadryads, Fawns, and other legendary creatures of poets and prehistoric traditions, quite as interesting as heraldic griffins, and dragons, which anticipated geologists, and which we would not willingly give up any more than quite believe; but I would maintain it is an "ascent," in one sense, rather than a "descent," Dr. Darwin exhibits, for when he shows how many creatures, four-footed or biped, far below man in *bodily* formation, yet far surpass not only the lowest, but even many considerably advanced races of men in mental and moral qualities he makes us feel, that whencesoever man has developed in bodily organization, he has risen from a lower condition even compared with the brutes, and certainly proves that whencesoever and howsoever derived, man can never in any stage of development become a complete animal worthy of belonging to the brute company. He must be in body and in mental condition either below the beast or above! We wrong the animals, whose natural history is our study, when we talk of a man being, or making himself a beast or a brute; for the beasts would disown him, and show him to be worse than they, if he is not higher; and we wrong our own higher nature, when we forget or disregard the physical condition in which we are here dwelling.

As the butterfly is ever but a beautiful winged grub, so man carries the limiting conditions of body in his highest flights of power, and in his bodily imperfections is conscious of higher energies and destinies. Whether developed from the protoplasmic matter lining the ocean's bed, and cleaving to its rocks miles deep, or descended from quadruped or biped in bodily organization, I care not; for to use the recent words of Mr. Froude to the students of St. Andrew's University—"It is nothing to me how the Maker of *me* has been pleased to construct the organized substance which I call my body.

It is *mine*, not *me*." The "Nous," the intellectual spirit being an ousia—an essence, we believe to be an imperishable something which has been engendered in us from another source. As Wordsworth says :—

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;  
The soul that rises in us our life's star,  
And cometh from afar ;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
Not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,  
From heaven which is our home."