

If not unintelligible, not only to most ladies, but to a great many gentlemen. And it must, moreover, be said that the mere "lay" taste for a work like the "Descent of Man" has in it a savour of vulgar curiosity rather than traces of a sincere desire to search after truth. This point, still, we do not desire to follow up. Combe Darwin is well enough, and in its exposition might supply an observer with further illustrations of the doctrine caricatured. This circumstance might restrain amateur reviewers of passages from the "Book of Expression." For the rest, it may be quoted that as the eye only sees that which it brings with it, the power of seeing a study of this volume will affect the circulating library readers very differently indeed, and it is so far well, for us, at any rate, that its materials do not consist of facts and statements resembling the Trebizond honey, which we know was composed of the sugar of noxious blossoms, and so was death to those who partook of it.

Review 15/72

THE GLOBE, FRIDAY,

EXPRESSION.

There is a good old story of a horse dealer who disguised criticism by insisting that the most glaring weaknesses of an animal were proofs of excellence. Mr. Darwin seems to have taken a lesson from the trade when he put forward a comparison between the expression of emotion in man and other animals as evidence of their common parentage, and further proof of the theory of evolution. It is interesting to look back on the steps in the author's course. He rides his hobby so hard and so straight, that we have some hope it will land him at last safe in old-established beliefs. The theory of evolution started on the principle of natural selection—the victory of the strongest in the struggle of life. This principle was intelligible enough, but unfortunately, there were a great many things not only inconsistent with the theory, but absolutely contradictory to it; peculiarities of structure perpetuated which, instead of being useful to the possessor, were exactly the reverse—a cause of danger or weakness instead of safety or strength. Admitting that "natural selection" was delightful as an explanation of the fact that the Pyrenean grew white among the snows of winter in order to conceal itself from its foes, still the principle failed to account for the conspicuous gaudiness of others of the feathered tribe. At first it might have been thought that a theory not founded on experiment, but on guess, as an explanation of phenomena, must be given up as soon as phenomena were discovered which were inconsistent with the theory. Mr. Darwin, however, modified his theory to suit the facts. Considering for a moment what was the cause that all people would allow to be the most variable and uncertain, he found it in feminine caprice. Here was the very thing he wanted. Who could venture to say that anything was too weak, useless, ugly, or absurd for some member of the sex to choose it. Inconsistencies might be expected if we had to take into account the various fancies of female coquettes of all classes, from the Newfoundland to the butterfly, the sturgeon to the baboons. There was no doubt a slight difficulty in the fact that it is by no means common for two females to have the same fancy, and that in order to perpetuate a useless variation, generation after generation ought to be capricious by rote, and follow one method in their madness, thus apparently acting contrary to experience. There was also another little difficulty. The principle of selection is by no means universal. Among dogs and fishes and a vast number of the lower animals, including gaudy-coloured moths, there is no selection whatever. However, the general principle was undeniable; feminine caprice might be the cause of numberless inconsistencies, and Genesis being excluded from the controversy, there was no man living who could say that he had watched the baboon descend from chaos to the present time, and that it had sprung into existence as a complete ape, and had never developed into a human animal. People might point out that, as far as evidence goes, there is no development of species; they might show from ancient statues that man was the same creature before the Christian era; from the mummies of the Pyramids that a cat, precisely similar to the tabbies of to-day, lived four thousand years ago; or from the geologist records of primeval time that as many species of fish existed then as now in any given district. To this Mr. Darwin had his answer; 2,000 years were not sufficient for the most microscopic change; 3,000 are but a moment in the scheme. His theory presumed existence millions of years beyond the sight of the most imaginative geologist. It was difficult to contend with a man who confessed that his evidence was lost, and only existed in his own fancy.

But he was somewhat rash when he attempted to prove similarity between man and beast in all the physical details more particularly connected with the expression of thought and feeling. Still, people have asked Mr. Darwin for an explanation of the fact; that there are many peculiarities of man of which no trace is found in the most anthropomorphic of the apes. Among other things it has been noticed that the chief expressions of emotion exhibited by man are the same throughout the world; that a great number of the more characteristic of them differ not only in degree but in kind from those of any other animals. Sir Charles Bell, at the beginning of the century, much struck with this fact, closely examined the human face, and came to the conclusion that there are muscles which are not only peculiar to it, but not when it is impossible to conceive any other object for their exertion than that of expressing feeling and sentiment. If this view of Sir C. Bell be correct, and man is endowed with certain peculiar muscles solely for the sake of expressing emotions peculiar to him, the fact is strongly opposed to the belief that man is descended from some other and lower form. To decry this objection is the object of the volume before us. The writer states that for thirty-eight years he has been considering the difficulty, and he now gives the answer that has been produced by such mountains of work. First he declares that Sir C. Bell is wrong in saying that any muscles are peculiar to the human countenance, and as we have no facilities for examining the "corrugator supercilii" that trains the eyebrows, or the "depressor alar nasi" that draws down the sides of the nose in rare kinds of baboons, we must leave that point, only saying Sir C. Bell was in one thing, Mr. Darwin another. But assuming that other animals than man have the same facial muscles, still many of Mr. Darwin's readers will be struck with this fact—that he thinks it all-important for his argument to show that some of the lower animals laugh and weep in precisely the same manner as man. Most people are too well acquainted with the hideous grin of the hyena or the ape to be startled by this theory; while as to weeping, Mr. Darwin has great difficulty in getting evidence of any animal shedding a tear of grief. The best he has got is but hearsay, and hearsay does not always stand the test of examination. And possibly there may be some explanation to be given of Mr. Darwin's instance of a monkey's eye watering in the Zoological Gardens, or elephants shedding tears in India when struggling in the dust. Perhaps, however, it is not worth while to question Mr. Darwin's facts, for he admits that the most anthropomorphic apes, which now come closest to man in the scale of creation—his nearest relations, it is to be presumed, according to the evolution theory—have not the power of weeping. It would therefore seem that man must have inherited this through many tearless generations: the faculty of crying skipping not only generations, but the great,

but countless or at least uncounted species. Nothing, again, we should have thought peculiar to man, Mr. Darwin says so. But we fear that he will hardly persuade his fair readers or their admirers that the charming post of beauty quarrelling coquettishly, is precisely analogous to the expression of a sulky baboon, or that the turn of the nose expressive of scorn or disgust, inherit an inheritance from those pre-human ancestors who have the power of sneezing rapidly from the mouth. "Howling," on the other hand, Mr. Darwin allows to be peculiar to man, and "innate" in him, that is to say, it is not learnt by each person, but is a natural mode of expression acquired by descent, without instruction or exercise of the will. Yet he wishes us to believe that some primeval infant learnt to wince with his eyes while screaming in order to protect his eyeballs from being gorged with blood, and to weep, though this art was only useful—if it were—to the squalling baby, that child's descendants inherited it for the purpose of expressing deep thought or anxious reflection. There are many equally ingenious explanations of expression in the book, and much in it to interest the reader. The writer is extremely fair and candid; too much so indeed to be a good advocate. His present volume will not, we think, promote his object. Not only are many of his arguments overstrained and inconclusive, but his admissions are almost fatal to his theory. One of them is all-important. Having obtained observations of the modes of expression common to almost all species of the human race, he finds that there is so close a similarity between distinct species in many unimportant as well as important details, that it is "incredible any such similarity, or, rather, identity of structure, could have been obtained by independent means." Yet this must have been the case if the different races of man are descended from several aboriginally distinct species. Mr. Darwin professes, therefore, to admit that all the races of man are derived from a single parent, human in both mind and body, before the period when these different races diverged from one another. It seems that if only he lives long enough, he must abandon evolution and be the strongest supporter of Adam and Eve.