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SOCIAL NOTES.

BY A PLAIN MAN.

DARWIN'S NEW BOOK.

By the courtesy of the Baron von Meudler, I have had, most accomplished reader, an opportunity of glancing at Darwin's eagerly looked-for new book, on "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals," some few presentation copies of which have arrived by the last mail. I do not think I can do better than, pending its expedition by this post than my own, give you some slight account of it.

The work, generally, is, of course, to be regarded as one of the series devoted by the author to his special theory of the Origin of Species, and of the Descent of Man. He divides his subject into four books, the first of which treats of the general principles of expression, the second of the means of expression in animals, the third of the special expressions of animals, and the last, which is in considerable detail, of the special expressions of man. There are also given a number of interesting illustrations of the manner of expression of the passions both in animals and man, which add greatly to the attractiveness of the book. Among these are seven halotype plates, to which the author attaches much value. In one of them will be found a portrait of "a young lady, who is supposed to be tearing up the photograph of a despised lover." The peculiar characteristics are "the partial closure of the eyelids," a slight retraction to one side of the face and head, a decided curl of the upper lip, accompanied with a strong arching of the mouth, which is drawn down at the corner, and the protruded indication of the nostrils that can be imagined. Altogether the young lady is one whom no prudent young man would think it desirable to offend; and, but that the nose is long and handsome, and set "up-wards like the petal of a flower," would not do badly for a notion of Mr. Tansworth's daughter—what's her name, Lyndal's?—in the sunset of his life. I notice this particular illustration as a good example of the more interesting—where all are interesting—parts of the book, and as showing how wide and familiar a range of topics the author has introduced.

Avoiding, as a rule, physiology, the author has devoted his pages strictly to expression, and to this more particularly as displayed by the various movements and distortions of the muscles of the face. But he does not stop there; the whole body and its expressive attitudes and actions are worked into the subject in a most interesting manner. The cat, dog, and chimpanzee, and various well-known birds, are all found to be factors in the general result, which is, "the conclusion that man is derived from some lower animal form, and the belief of the specific or subspecific unity of the several races." Upon the general hypothesis he says:—"No doubt, as long as man and all other animals are viewed as independent creations, an affected stop is put to our natural desire to investigate as far as possible the causes of Expression. By this doctrine anything and everything can be equally well explained, and it has proved as pernicious with respect to Expression as to every other branch of natural history. With mankind some exceptions, such as bristling of the hair under the influence of extreme heat, or the uncovering of the teeth under that of furious rage, can hardly be understood, except in the belief that man once existed in a much lower and animal-like condition."

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