

MR. HARDHACK ON THE DERIVATION OF MAN FROM THE MONKEY.

I CAN stand it no longer, sir. I have been seething and boiling inwardly for a couple of years at this last and final insult which science has put upon human nature, and now I must speak, or, if you will, explode. And how is it, I want to know, that the duty of hurling imprecations at this infernal absurdity has devolved upon me? Don't we employ a professional class to look after the interests of the race?—fellows heavily feed to see to it that gorilla and chimpanzee keep their distance?—paid, sir, by me and you to proclaim that men—ay, and women too—are at the top of things in origin, as well as in nature and destiny? Why are these retained attorneys of humanity so confoundedly cool and philosophical, while humanity is thus outraged? What's the use of their asserting, Sunday after Sunday, that man was made a little lower than the angels, when right under their noses are a set of anatomical miscreants who contend that he is only a little higher than the monkeys? And the thing has now gone so far, that I 'll be hanged if it is n't becoming a sign of a narrow and prejudiced mind to scout the idea that we are all descended from mindless beasts. You are a fossilized old foggy, in this day of scientific light, if you repudiate your relationship with any fossilized monstrosity which, from the glass case of a museum, mocks at you with a grin a thousand centuries old. To exalt a man's soul above his skeleton, is now to be behind the age. All questions of philosophy, sir, are fast declining into a question of bones,—and blasted dry ones they are! The largest minds are now all absorbed in the ugliest brutes, and the ape has passed from being the butt of the menagerie to become the glory of the dissecting-room. And let me tell you, sir, that, if you make any pretensions to be a natural-

ist, you will find those of your collaborators who defend the dominant theory as great masters of hard words as of big ones; and if you have the audacity to deny that man is derived from the monkey, it is ten chances to one they will forthwith proceed to treat you *like* one.

Now I go against the whole thing, sir. When the public mind first took its bent towards science, I, for one, foresaw that the Devil would soon be to pay with our cherished ideas. Under the plea of exercising some of the highest faculties of human nature, these scientific descendantists have exclusively devoted themselves to the lowest objects of human concern. The meaner the creature, the more they think of it. You, sir, as a free and enlightened citizen of this great Republic, doubtless think something of yourself; but I can tell you there is n't one of these origin-of-species Solons who would n't pass you over as of no account in comparison with any anomalous rat which you would think it beneath your dignity to take the trouble of poisoning. There is n't a statesman, or philanthropist, or poet, or hero, or saint in the land, sir, that they would condescend to look at, when engaged in exploring the remains of some ignorant ass of the Stone Period. As for your ordinary Christian, he has no chance whatever. The only man they think worth the attention of scientific intelligence is pre-historic man, the man nearest the monkey. And this is called progress! This is the result of founding schools, colleges, and societies for the advancement of knowledge! No interest now in Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton,—in Leonidas, Epaminondas, Tell, and Washington,—in Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Napoleon. They, poor devils, were simply vertebrates; their structure is so well known that it is unworthy the attention of our modern

prowlers into the earth's crust in search of lower and obscurer specimens of the same great natural division. What do you think these resurrectionists on a great scale, these Jerry Crunchers of palæontology, care for you and me? Indeed, put Alfred Tennyson alive into one end of a museum, and one of those horrible monsters whose bones are being continually dug up into the other, and see which will be rated the more interesting object of the two by the "great minds" of the present day.

And now what is the consequence of thus inverting the proper objects of human concern? Why, if you estimate things according to their descent in the scale of dignity, and occupy your faculties exclusively with organized beings below man, you will tend to approach them. Evil communications corrupt good manners. You can't keep company with monkeys without insensibly getting be-monkeyed. Your mind feeds on them until its thoughts take their shape and nature. Into the "veins of your intellectual frame" monkey blood is injected. The monkey thus put into you naturally thinks that monkeydom is belied; and self-esteem, even, is not revolted by the idea of an ape genealogy. In this way the new theory of the origin of man originated. Huxley must have pretty thoroughly assimilated monkey before he recognized his ancestor in one. The poor beast himself may have made no pretensions to the honor, until he was mentally transformed into Huxley, entered into the substance of Huxley's mind, became inflamed with Huxley's arrogance. This is the true explanation, not perhaps of the origin of species, but of the origin of the theory of the origin; and I should like to thunder the great truth into the ears of all the scientific societies now talking monkey with the self-satisfied air of great discoverers. Yes, sir, and I should also be delighted to insinuate that this progress of monkey into man was not so great an example of "progressive development" as they seem inclined to suppose, and did n't require the long reaches of prehistoric time they consider necessary

to account for the phenomenon. Twenty years would be enough, in all conscience, to effect *that* development.

Thus I tell you, sir, it is n't monkey that rises anatomically into man, but rather man that descends mentally into monkey. Why, nothing is more common than to apply to us human beings the names of animals, when we display weaknesses analogous to their habitual characters. But this is metaphor, not classification; poetry, not science. Thus I, Solomon Hardhack, was called a donkey the other day by an intimate friend. Thought it merely a jocosse reference to my obstinacy, and did not knock him down. Called the same name yesterday by a comparative anatomist. Thought it an insulting reference to my understanding, and did. But suppose that, in respect both to obstinacy and understanding, I had established, to my own satisfaction, a similarity between myself and that animal, do you imagine that I would be donkey enough to take the beast for my progenitor? Do you suppose that I would go even further, and, having established with the donkey a relation of descent, be mean enough to generalize the whole human race into participation in my calamity? No, sir, I am not sufficiently a man of science to commit that breach of good manners. Well, then, my proposition is, that nobody who reasons himself into a development from the monkey has the right to take mankind with him in his induction. His argument covers but one individual, — himself. As for the Hardhacks, they at least beg to be excused from joining him in that logical excursion, and insist on striking the monkey altogether out from their genealogical tree.

And speaking of genealogical trees, do the adherents of this mad theory realize the disgrace they are bringing on the most respectable families! There is not an aristocracy in Europe or America that can stand it one moment, for aristocracy is based on the greatness of forefathers. In America, you know, nobody is aristocratic who cannot count back at least to his great-

grandfather, who rode in a carriage, or — drove one. As for the Hardhacks, I may be allowed to say, though I despise family pride as much as any man, that they came in with the Conqueror, and went out with the Puritans. But if this horrible Huxleian theory be true, the farther a person is from his origin, the better; antiquity of descent is no longer a title to honor; and a man must pride himself in looking forward to his descendants rather than back to his ancestors. And what comfort is this to me, an unmarried man? With a monkey in the background, how can even a Hapsburg or a Guelf put on airs of superiority? How must he hide his face in shame to think, that, as his line lengthens into an obscure antiquity, the foreheads of his house slope, and their jaws project; that he has literally been all his life aping aristocracy, instead of being the real thing; and that, when he has reached his true beginning, his only consolation must be found in the fact that his great skulking, hulking, gibbering baboon of an ancestor rejoices, like himself, in the possession of "the third lobe," "the posterior cornu of the lateral ventricle," and "the hippocampus minor." Talk about radicalism, indeed! Why, I, who am considered an offence to my radical party for the extremes to which I run, cannot think of this swamping of all the families in the world without a thrill of horror and amazement! It makes my blood run cold to imagine this infernal Huxley pertly holding up the frontispiece of his book in the faces of the haughty nobility and gentry of his country, and saying, "Here, my friends, are drawings of the skeletons of gibbon, orang, chimpanzee, gorilla; select your ancestors; you pay your money and has your choice." I don't pretend to know anything about the temper of the present nobility and gentry of England; but if the fellow should do this thing to me, I would blow out of his skull everything in it which allied him with the apes, — taking a specially grim vengeance on "the posterior cornu of the lateral ventricle," — as sure as my

name's Hardhack, and as sure as there's any explosive power in gunpowder.

And in this connection, too, I should like to know how the champions of this man-monkey scheme get over a theological objection. Don't start, sir, and say I am unscientific. I am not going to introduce Christianity, or monotheism, or polytheism, or fetichism, but a religion which you know was before them all, and which consisted in the worship of ancestors. If you are in the custom of visiting in good society, you will find that that is a form of worship which has not yet altogether died out, but roots itself in the most orthodox creeds. Now you must admit that the people who worshipped their ancestors were the earliest people of whose religion we have any archæological record, and therefore a people who enjoyed the advantage of being nearer the ancestors of the race than any of the historical savages to whom you can appeal. I put it to you if this people, catching a glimpse of the monkey at the end of their line, if the monkey was really there, would have been such dolts as to worship it? A HE worship an IT! Don't you see, that, if this early people had nothing human but human conceit, that would alone have prevented them from doing this thing? Don't you see that they would have preserved a wise reticence in regard to such a shocking bar-sinister in their escutcheons? Worship ancestors, when ancestors are known to have been baboons! Why, you might as well tell me our fashionable friend Eglantine would worship his grandfather, if he knew his grandfather was a hodman. No, sir. That early people worshipped their ancestors, because they knew their ancestors were higher and nobler than themselves. To suppose the contrary would be a cruel imputation on the character of worthy antediluvians, who unfortunately have left no written account of themselves, and therefore present peculiar claims on the charitable judgment of every candid mind.

You have been a boy, sir, and doubtless had your full share in that amuse-

ment, so congenial to ingenuous youth, of stirring up the monkeys. You remember what an agreeable feeling of elation, springing from a conscious sense of superiority to the animals pestered, accompanied that exhilarating game. But suppose, while you were engaged in it, the suspicion had flashed across your mind that you were worrying your own distant relations; that it was undeveloped humanity you were poking and deriding; that the frisking, chattering, snarling creature you were tormenting was trying all the while to say, in his unintelligible speech, "Am I not *to be* a man and a brother?" Would not such an appeal have dashed your innocent mirth? Would you afterwards have been so clamorous or beseeching for parental pennies, as soon as the dead walls of your native town flamed with pictorial announcements of the coming menagerie? No, sir, you could not have passed a menagerie without a shudder of loathing or a pang of remorse. How fortunate it was, that, for the full enjoyment of your youthful sports, you were ignorant of the affecting fact that the monkey's head as well as your own possessed the "hippocampus minor" and "the posterior cornu of the lateral ventricle"!

I admit that this last argument is not addressed to your understanding alone. I despise all arguments on this point that are. I, for one, am not to be reasoned out of my humanity, and I won't be diddled into turning baboon through deference for anybody's logic. My opinions may be up for argument, but I myself am not up for argument. In a question affecting human nature itself, all the qualities of that nature should be addressed. Self-respect, respect for your parentage and your race, your moral instincts, and that force in you which says "I," — all these, having an interest in such a discussion, should have a voice in it; and I excrete the flunkey who will allow himself to be swindled out of manhood, and swindled into monkeyhood, by that pitiful little logic-chopper he calls his understanding. I am not "open to con-

viction" on this point, thank God! I don't pretend to know whether a "third lobe" is in my head or not, but I do know that Solomon Hardhack is there, and as long as he has possession of the premises, you will find written on his brow, "No monkeys need apply!"

Do you tell me that this is a matter exclusively for anatomists and naturalists to decide? That's the most impudent pretension of all. Why, it's all the other way. Have I not a personal interest in the question greater than any possible interest I can have in the diabolical lingo of scientific terms in which those fellows state the results of their investigations? Have I delegated to any College of Surgeons the privilege of chimpanzeeing my ancestors? No, sir. Just look at it. Here are the members of the human race, going daily about their various avocations, entirely ignorant that any conspiracy is on foot to trick them out of their fatherhood in Adam. While they are thus engaged in getting an honest living, a baker's dozen of unauthorized miscreants assemble in a dissecting-room, manipulate a lot of skulls, and decide that the whole batch of us did not descend from a human being. I tell you the whole thing is an atrocious violation of the rights of man. It's unconstitutional, sir! Talk about the glorious principle of "No taxation without representation"! That is simply a principle which affects our pockets, and we fought, bled, and died for it. Shall we not do a thousand times more for our souls? Shall we let our souls be voted away by a congress of dissectors, not chosen by our votes, — persons who not only don't represent, but infamously misrepresent us? Why, it's carrying the tactics of a New York Common Council from politics into metaphysics! And don't allow yourself to be humbugged by these assassins of your nature. I know the way they have of electioneering. It is, "My dear Mr. Hardhack, a man of your intelligence can't look at this ascending scale of skulls without seeing that the difference between Homo

and Pithecus is of small account,"— "A man of your candid mind, Mr. Hardhack, must admit that no absolutely structural line of demarcation, wider than that between the animals which immediately succeed us in the scale, can be drawn between the animal world and ourselves." And while I don't comprehend a word of this cursed gibberish, I am expected to bow, and look wise, and say, "Certainly," and "Just so," and "It's plain to the meanest capacity," and be soft-sawdered out of my humanity, and infamously acknowledge myself babooned. But they can't try it on me, sir. When a man talks to me in that fashion, I measure with *my* eyes "the structural line of demarcation" between *his*, and with my whole force plant there my fist.

Do you complain that I am speaking in a passion? It seems to me it's about time for all of us to be in a passion. Perhaps, if we show these men of science that there is in us a little righteous wrath, they may be considerate enough to stop with the monkey, — make the monkey "a finality," sir, and not go lower down in the scale of creation to find an ancestor for us. It is our meek submission to the monkey which is now urging them to attempt more desperate outrages still. What if Darwin had been treated as he deserved when he published the original edition of his villanous book? If I had been Chief Justice of England when that high priest of "natural selection" first tried to oust me out of the fee-simple of my species, I would have given him an illustration of "the struggle for existence" he would n't have relished. I would have hanged him on the highest gallows ever erected on this planet since the good old days of Haman. What has been the result of a mistaken clemency in his case? Why, he has just published a fourth edition of his treatise, and what do you think he now puts forward as our "probable" forefather? "It is probable," he says, "from what we know of the embryos of mammals, birds, fishes, and reptiles,

that all the members in these four great classes are the modified descendants of one ancient progenitor, which was furnished in its adult state with branchiæ, had a swim-bladder, four simple limbs, and a long tail fitted for an aquatic life." Probable, indeed! Why, it is also probable, I suppose, that this accounts for the latent tendency in the blood of our best-educated collegians to turn watermen, and abandon themselves with a kind of sacred fury to the fierce delight of rowing-matches. The "long tail" fitted for an aquatic life" will also "probably" come in course of time. Student-mammals of Harvard and Yale, what think you of your "one ancient progenitor"? Inheritors of his nature, are you sure you have yet succeeded in cutting off the entail of the estate?

We have been brought up, sir, in the delusive belief that "revolutions never go backwards." It's a lie, I tell you; for this new revolution in science does nothing else. It is going backwards and backwards and backwards, and it won't stop until it involves the whole of us in that nebulous mist of which, it seems, all things are but the "modified" development. Well, in for a penny, in for a pound. Let us not pause at that "long tail fitted for an aquatic life" which made our one ancient progenitor such an ornament of fluvial society, but boldly strike out into space, and clutch with our thoughts that primitive tail which flares behind the peacock of the heavens, — the comet. There's nebulous matter for your profound contemplation. That is the flimsy material out of which stars, earth, water, plants, jelly-fish, ancient progenitor, monkey, man, were all equally evolved. That is the grand original of all origins. We are such stuff as comets' tails are made of, — "third lobe," "hippocampus minor," "posterior cornu of the lateral ventricle," and all the rest. "Children of the Mist," we are made by this "sublime speculation" at home in the universe. Nebuchadnezzar, when he went to grass, only visited a distant connec-

tion. The stars over our heads have for thousands of years been winking their relationship with us, and we have never intelligently returned the jocose salutation, until science taught us the use of our eyes. We are now able to detect the giggle, as of feminine cousins, in the grain whose risibilities are touched by the wind. We can now cheer even the dull stone which we kick from our path with a comforting "Hail fellow, well met!" We must not be aristocrats and put on airs. We must hob and nob with all the orders of creation, saying alike to radiates, articulates, and mollusks, "Go ahead, my hearties! don't be shamefaced; you're as good as vertebrates, and only want, like some of our human political lights, a little backbone to have your claims admitted. You are all on your glorious course manward, *via* the ancient progenitor and the chimpanzee. It seems a confounded long journey; for Nature is a slow coach, and thinks nothing of a million of years to effect a little transformation. But one of these days our science may find means to expedite that old slug-gard, and hurry you through the intermediate grades in a way to astonish the venerable lady. Liberty, equality, and fraternity,—those are the words which will open the gates of your organized Bastiles, and send your souls on a career of swifter development. Trust in Darwin, and let creation ring with your song of "A good time coming, Invertebrates!"

Well, sir, you want logic, and there you have it with a vengeance! I have pitched you back into nebula, where these fellows tell me you belong, and I trust you're satisfied. Now what is my comfort, sir, after making my brain dizzy with this sublime speculation of theirs? Why, it's found in the fact, that, by their own concession, the thing

will not work, but must end in the biggest "catastrophe" ever heard of. The whole infernal humbug is to explode, sir, and by no exercise of their "hippocampus minor" can they prevent it. This fiery mist, which has hardened and rounded into our sun and planets, and developed into the monkey's "third lobe" and ours, does not lose the memory or the conceit of *its* origin, but is determined to get back into its first condition as quickly as circumstances will admit. It considers itself somehow to have been swindled in every step of the long process it has gone through in arriving at our brains. It don't think the speculation pays; prefers its lounging, vagabond, *dolce far niente* existence, loafing through the whole space between the sun and Neptune, to any satisfaction it finds in being concentrated in your thoughts or mine; and accordingly it meditates a *coup d'état* by which the planets are to fall into the sun at such a pace as to knock the whole system into eternal smash, and reduce it to its original condition of nebulous mist, sir. Do you like the prospect? I tell you there is no way of escaping from conclusions, if you are such a greenhorn as to admit premises. I have been over the whole chain of the logic, and find its only weak link is the monkey one. Knock that out, and you save the solar system as well as your own dignity as a man, sir; retain it, and some thousands of generations hence the brains of your descendants will be blown into a texture as gauzy as a comet's tail, and it will be millions of ages before, in the process of a new freak of development in the unquiet nebula, they can hope to arrive again at the honor of possessing that inestimable boon, dear equally to baboons and to men, "the posterior cornu of the lateral ventricle"!