

NDAY, MARCH 19, 1871.

THE IMPROVED APE.

DEDICATED TO DOCTOR DARWIN.  
 "I have been, from the Central Park you have been,  
 I know the chachama full well, I ween,  
 I mean to speak to, but you must have seen  
 I remarked with repulsion that grinning gossion,  
 That hideous, hairy-faced, vicious baboon  
 At the right as you entered the Arsenal basement  
 I looked the animals down in that place pent.  
 Now of course you'll admit  
 That he don't look a bit  
 Like a human—but what if, without any bother,  
 I inform you at once he's a man and a brother.  
 At least, Doctor Darwin, that first-rate authority,  
 On whom many persons (but not the majority,  
 Among naturalists claim the priority,  
 I know which they tell me commands heavy sales  
 As to which were formerly apes and wore tails!  
 Now, when I say "we" I don't mean you and me,  
 For our ancestors very remote, don't you see?  
 You may laugh if you like or exclaim that a lie it is,  
 But you're not a member of learned societies  
 As Wallace and Lyell and Huxley and Lubbock,  
 To believe what the Doctor has writ in his new  
 Book.  
 At least so he tells us, and they don't deny it,  
 Have yielded assent by so far keeping quiet.  
 Don't think if they really believe it, why then  
 Say to what Dogberry calls "very credible men."  
 By the bye, let me say,  
 In a casual way,  
 Though I ne'er would advise  
 Men to plagiarize,  
 I think Doctor Darwin in search of a name  
 For his book might have fairly made use of the  
 Same.  
 Douglas Jerrold gave that which established his  
 Fame;  
 The author of which caused so many conjectures,  
 Dr. D. acknowledged the Caudle Lectures.  
 He gave the candid appendage once worn in the tropics  
 For our ancestry's one of the principal topics  
 Discussed by the doctor, though its disappearance  
 He's clearly accounted for, yet, from their rear ends,  
 He seems to imply,  
 Though he don't tell you why,  
 That as apes became men, tails no longer availed,  
 And so they at length were completely curtailed.  
 It is perfectly clear he don't credit the theory,  
 Which is quite as veracious, or not more mendacious,  
 Than some books I've read (my goodness gracious  
 The way some folks lie in print's really audacious),  
 That our anthropoid ancestors taking their ease,  
 Used to sit on their tails, which at last by degrees  
 They flew away altogether from too constant friction,  
 A tale which may be, or may not be, a fiction.  
 To return to the Doctor: He says that we can  
 Very see how that wonderful animal, man,  
 Has now erect attitude came to assume,  
 A thing which is not quite so clear, I presume,  
 To those folks who're unhappily not scientific,  
 In regard to myself I will be quite specific;  
 And declare I can't see it, though others, of course,  
 Think they see how the apes gave up playing "all  
 Fours."  
 Though afterwards, when they in time became men,  
 I don't wonder they took a great fancy to Euchre;  
 A game I like muchly. I've played it for hours  
 On a stretch, though infrequently holding the bowers.  
 Whether here nor there that is—let's hear Dr. Darwin,  
 He observes that baboons—the hideous "varmin!"  
 Like to dwell where the country is rocky and hilly,  
 Which suggests the idea, pray don't think it silly,  
 That our ancestors must, I'll wage a dime,  
 Have had a decidedly "up-hill time."  
 Darwin says that baboons never climb trees unless  
 It is  
 They're driven to that course by urgent necessities.  
 He probably means (you may call this a joke or not,  
 As you please), when in search of "the milk in the  
 Cocosnut."  
 But whether we're sprung from the chimpanzees,  
 Gorillas, chachamas, or what you please  
 Among the ape tribe, which you know's sub-  
 Divided  
 Into numerous classes, he's quite undecided.  
 "The highest in the social scale," opines  
 The Doctor (though which he nowhere defines),  
 Obtained pre-eminence over the rest,  
 And became human beings. Now, I'll be blest  
 If you wouldn't be puzzled, when put to the test,  
 To say which stands first in the "social scale,"  
 Chimpanzees or Gorillas. You'd certainly fall.  
 To a man like the Doctor 'twould be no task;  
 In fact, I should very much like to ask  
 Him to make it a matter of notoriety,  
 What's the *creme de la creme* of ape-ish society?  
 Chimpanzee, gorilla, or other variety,  
 How can we determine this question occult,  
 What tests to apply to obtain that result.  
 I should also be gratified to get  
 Some knowledge of baboon etiquette.  
 Is a chimpanzee lady considered the ton,  
 Does she all but the "very best circles" shun?  
 Is she "At home" to Messieurs, the gorillas,  
 Or does she consort with some other "fellahs?"  
 Pray enlighten us Doctor, until you can, sir,  
 We await with incredulous horror your answer.

MAN AN IMPROVED APE

The Last Result of Darwinism.

Mr. CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN, the eminent naturalist, and author of "The Origin of Species," has just published in England his last and greatest work, *The Descent of Man*, which the Appletons have in press, and will issue in a few days. The work, we understand, has created a profound sensation in England, where the first edition was sold in a day, and will undoubtedly, when it appears, be received here with equal interest.

Broadly expressed, Darwinism is the attempt to account for the present and past diversities of life on our globe by means of continuous development, without the intervention of special creative fiat at the origin of each distinct species. It is well known that in the hands of breeders useful peculiarities in animals are perpetuated by pairing those which show such peculiarities. Our present improved breeds of long-horned and short-horned cattle, race horses, merino sheep, and the countless varieties of pigeons, all developed from a single stock—the rock pigeon—demonstrate that these peculiarities may not only be perpetuated, but increased largely, if not indefinitely. This process is known as *selection*, and is used by man exclusively for his own benefit. Mr. Darwin extends this procedure to Nature, with an important change in its object. Man can only select visible characteristics; Nature, on the contrary, is continually scrutinizing the *whole* being, and as continually stamping with approval those variations which are useful to the organism. This principle works altogether by means of life and death—the latter being the penalty of a failure to meet successfully the circumstances in which a being is placed, be those circumstances physical or vital, enemies or forces—in a word, “the conditions of existence.”

An illustration given by Prof. Huxley will serve to fix this in the mind: "In the woods of Florida there are many pigs, and very curiously, they are all black. Prof. Wyman, many years ago, asked some of the people why they had no white pigs, and was informed there was a root in the woods (called paint root), of which, if the *white* pigs eat, their hoofs cracked and they died, while it did not hurt the *black* pigs at all." This weeding out on the one side, and preservation on the other, is what is meant by *natural selection*.

In the introduction to his new work, "The Descent of Man," Mr. Darwin quotes, with evident satisfaction, the remark made by the eminent naturalist Carl Vogt in his address as President of the National Institution of Geneva, in 1863, that "nobody in Europe at least now ventured to maintain the doctrine of the independent creation of species"—a statement rather broader, we fancy, than the facts will warrant, though it is no doubt true that a large number of naturalists have accepted the theory of Darwinism, and admit that species are the modified descendants of other species. Mr. Darwin himself, however, says that those who accept his theory are mostly the younger race, and "of the older and honored chiefs in natural science, many unfortunately are still opposed to evolution in every form." He mentions as among the eminent naturalists who have adopted his views Wallace, Huxley, Lyell, and Lubbock in England, and in Germany, Buckner, Rolle, and Hackel. An Italian philosopher, Dr. Francesco, also maintains the same views in a work published in 1869, under the significant title of "Man, made in the Image of God, was also made in the Image of the Ape."

The following extracts, from advance sheets of Mr. Darwin's new book, will sufficiently indicate its scope and character:

As soon as some ancient member in the great series of the Primates came, owing to a change in its manner of procuring subsistence, or to a change in the conditions of its native country, to live somewhat less on trees and more on the ground, its manner of progression would have been modified; and in this case it is probable we have had to become either more strictly quadrupedal or bipedal. Baboons frequently climb up high trees, and only from necessity climb up high trees; and they have acquired almost the gait of a dog. Man alone has become a biped; and we can, I think, partly see how he has come to assume his erect attitude, which forms one of the most conspicuous differences between him and his nearest allies. Man could not have attained his present dominant position in the world without the use of his hands, which are so admirably adapted to act in obedience to his will. As Sir C. Bell insists, "the hand supplies all instruments, and by its correspondence with the intellect gives him universal dominion." But the hands and arms could hardly have become perfect enough to have manufactured weapons, or to have hurled stones and spears with any aim, as long as they were habitually used for locomotion and for supporting the whole weight of the body, or as long as they were especially well adapted, as previously remarked, for climbing trees. Such rough treatment would also have blunted the sense of touch, on which their delicate use largely depends. From these causes alone it would have been an advantage to man to have become a biped; but, for many actions, it is almost necessary that both arms and the whole upper part of the body should be free; and he must for this end stand firmly on his feet. To gain this great advantage, the feet, hands, and arms had to undergo great loss of prehensile modification, though this has entailed a loss of the power of prehension. It accords with this principle of the division or physiological labor, which prevails throughout the animal kingdom, that, as the hands became perfected for prehension, the feet should have become perfected for support and locomotion. With some savages, however, the foot has not altogether lost its prehensile power, as shown by their manner of climbing trees and of using them in other ways.

In regard to bodily size or strength, we do not know whether man is descended from some comparatively small species, like the chimpanzee, or from one as powerful as the gorilla; and, therefore, we cannot say whether man has become larger or stronger or smaller and weaker, in comparison with his progenitors. We should, however, bear in mind that an animal possessing great size, strength, and ferocity, and which, like the gorilla, could defend itself from all enemies, would probably, though

not necessarily, have failed to become social; and this would most effectually have checked the acquirement by man of his higher mental qualities, such as sympathy and the love of his fellow-creatures. Hence it might have been an immense advantage to man to have sprung from some comparatively weak creature.

lively weak creature. To give a slight glimpse of the physical strength of man, his little speck, his wand, his corporeal powers, &c., are more than counterbalanced by his intellectual powers, through which he has, while still remaining in a barbarous state, formed for himself weapons, tools, &c., and secondly by his social qualities, which lead him to give aid to his fellow-men, and to receive it in return. No country in the world abounds in a greater degree with dangerous beasts than Southern Africa: no country presents more fearful physical hardships than the arctic regions; yet one of the puniest races, namely, the Bushmen, maintain themselves in Southern Africa, as do the dwarfed Esquimaux in the arctic regions. The early progenitors of man were no doubt inferior in intellect, and probably in social disposition, to the lowest existing savages; but it is quite conceivable that they might have existed, or even flourished, if, while the grassy fields lost their brutelike powers, and the climbing trees, &c., they at the same time advanced in intellect. But granting that the progenitors of man were far more helpless and defenceless than any existing savages, if they had inhabited some warm continent, or large island, such as Australia, or New Guinea, or Borneo (the latter island being now tenanted by the orang), they would not have been exposed to any special danger. In an area as large as one of these islands, the competition between tribe and tribe would have been sufficient, under favorable conditions, to have raised man, through the survival of the fittest, combined with the inherited effects of habit, to his present high position in the organic scale.

At the period and place, whenever and where ever it may have been, when man first lost his hairy covering, he probably inhabited a hot country; and this would have been favorable for a frugivorous diet, on which, judging from analogy, he subsisted. We are far from knowing how long ago it was when man first appeared from the Catinahine stock; but this may have occurred at an epoch as remote as the Eocene period; for the higher apes had diverged from the lower apes as early as the Upper Miocene period, as shown by the existence of the *Dryopithecus*. We are also quite ignorant at how rapid a rate organisms, whether high or low in the scale, may under favorable circumstances be modified; we know, however, that some have retained the same form during an enormous lapse of time. From what we see going on under domestication, we learn that within the same species many of the descendants of the same species may be not at all changed, some a little, and some greatly changed. Therefore it may have been with man, who has undergone a great amount of modification in certain characters in comparison with the higher apes.

It will be seen at a glance that these views are at direct variance with Christianity, at least as commonly understood. They ignore altogether the spiritual part of man, and regard him simply as an animal. They ignore also the existence, or at least the active existence of the Creator, who, although He may at the remote beginning have created the germs from which everything has been developed, is yet represented as having abdicated his functions, and turned over the universe to the beneficent control of Nature, by whose incessant agency, through the principle of natural selection, everything is accomplished.

Mr. Darwin, like the rest of his atheistic school, evidently rejects with contempt the idea of a spiritual God who creates and sustains the universe. He would probably say there is no proof of his existence. And yet he coolly assumes the existence of a supreme and beneficent power which he calls Nature, and assigns to it the active and intelligent control of the universe. What proof has he of the existence of this mysterious and incomprehensible

power? His "Nature" is as supernatural and as incessantly active as the God whom he rejects, but whose powers and attributes he ascribes to her. His theory would be relieved of much of its odiousness if his shallow and vulgar theological prejudices had not prompted him to substitute this purely fanciful "Nature" for the true and living God, whose providence by all sound theologians is justly regarded as performing the functions and exercising the beneficent and selective powers which Mr. Darwin needlessly ascribes to his imaginary "Nature."

Apart, however, from his theological heresies, we think Mr. Darwin is mistaken in supposing that his theories have become settled principles of natural science. They are in vogue just now, it is true, and are attracting universal attention, and commanding a good deal of enthusiastic assent. But so did the kindred theories of his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, which are now utterly neglected and forgotten. And so also did the transmutation theories of Lamarck, of whom Mr. Darwin is only a follower, and whose crude and inaccurate conclusions were greatly admired until they were exploded by the authority of Cuvier.

Mr. Darwin writes with an air of great candor and ingenuousness. But the critical reader will soon perceive what M. Flourens, the Perpetual Secretary of the French Academy of Sciences, long ago pointed out, that he cites only authors who confirm his opinions ; that he glides over difficulties, and dwells strongly on facts which no one denies, but which prove little or nothing; that he continually takes for granted what he cannot prove; and that, in short, his whole argument is little better than a string of assumptions. The array of facts, which he has culled and manipulated with so much care to prove his theory of development, prove no such thing. Any intelligent Swedenborgian, for instance, would readily furnish for their explanation a theory much more plausible than that of Mr. Darwin, and at the same time in strict accordance with Christian doctrine. He has not been able to find in the whole range of natural science one single proof of the development of one species from another. Neither natural history nor geology affords the slightest trace of a kangaroo producing a monkey, or of a monkey developing into a man. Even his principle of natural

selection, on which his whole elaborate structure depends, is obviously fanciful and arbitrary when carried to the extent which he gives it.

But notwithstanding these defects, Mr. Darwin's new book is a most important and valuable contribution to knowledge. The questions he raises and the views he maintains cannot be sidestepped by either science or religion. They must be met and answered, accepted or exploded. They are the vital questions of the age, and we do not object to their discussion. We do not accept Mr. Darwin's theories, and do not see that he has made any real progress toward establishing them by substantial and indisputable proofs. But he is clearly entitled to a patient and fair hearing, as a man of great ability, vast and varied research, and unexceptionable courtesy of manner.



