

ORIGIN OF MAN.—Mr. Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, thus summarizes the results of his researches—

“By considering the embryological structure of man—the homologies which he presents with the lower animals—the rudiments which he retains—and the reversions to which he is liable, we can partly recall in imagination the former condition of our early progenitors; and can approximately place them in their proper position in the zoological series. We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World. This creature, if its whole structure had been examined by a naturalist, would have been classed amongst the *Quadrupeds*, as surely as would the common and still more ancient progenitor of the Old and New World monkeys. The *Quadrupeds* and all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms, either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal. In the dim obscurity of the past we can see that the early progenitor of all the *Vertebrata* must have been an aquatic animal, provided with branchiæ, with the two sexes united in the same individual, and with the most important organs of the body (such as the brain and heart) imperfectly developed. This animal seems to have been more like the larvæ of our existing marine *Ascidians* than any other known form.”

Here it is seen that Mr. Darwin has arrived at the conclusion that we can “partly recall in imagination” only, the former condition of our early progenitors, which condition he thinks was that of a sort of hairy monkey, before then “probably” a sort of kangaroo or opossum, before then a snake, lizard or crocodile, before then a fish, before then “in the dim obscurity of the past” a water animal with both sexes in one, which “seems to have been” some sort of marine larvæ.

Thus, by the help of “imagination,” “must have been,” “probable derivations,” “dim obscurity of the past,” induction, generalization, etc., Mr. Darwin presents his theory of man’s ancestry, although he acknowledges that “we do not know under what forms or how life originated in this world.” That is the fact, Mr. Darwin does not know, neither does he go the way to know, and his theory of the origin, descent, or ascent of man rests largely upon conjecture. “Imagination” and “probability” and “dim obscurity” are great helps in the construction of theories, especially when, after all, we have to confess that “we do not know.”