

WORLD'S FAMOUS BOOKS

The Descent of Man

And Selection in Relation to Sex

By

Charles Darwin

Revised Edition

Illustrated

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CHARLES DARWIN.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

During the successive reprints of the first edition of this work, published in 1871, I was able to introduce several important corrections; and now that more time has elapsed, I have endeavored to profit by the fiery ordeal through which the book has passed, and have taken advantage of all the criticisms which seem to me sound. I am also greatly indebted to a large number of correspondents for the communication of a surprising number of new facts and remarks. These have been so numerous, that I have been able to use only the more important ones; and of these, as well as of the more important corrections, I will append a list. Some new illustrations have been introduced, and four of the old drawings have been replaced by better ones, done from life by Mr. T. W. Wood. I must especially call attention to some observations which I owe to the kindness of Prof. Huxley (given as a supplement at the end of Part I.), on the nature of the differences between the brains of man and the higher apes. I have been particularly glad to give these observations, because during the last few years several memoirs on the subject have appeared on the Continent, and their importance has been, in some cases, greatly exaggerated by popular writers.

I may take this opportunity of remarking that my critics frequently assume that I attribute all changes of corporeal structure and mental power exclusively to the natural selection of such variations as are often called spontaneous; whereas, even in the first edition of the 'Origin of Species,' I distinctly stated that great weight must be attributed to the inherited effects of use and disuse, with respect both to the body and mind. I also attributed some amount of modification to the direct and prolonged action of changed conditions of life. Some allowance, too, must be made for occasional reversions of structure; nor must we forget what I have called "correlated" growth, meaning, thereby, that various parts of the organization are in some unknown manner so connected, that when one part varies, so do others; and if variations in the one

are accumulated by selection, other parts will be modified. Again, it has been said by several critics, that when I found that many details of structure in man could not be explained through natural selection, I invented sexual selection; I gave, however, a tolerably clear sketch of this principle in the first edition of the 'Origin of Species,' and I there stated that it was applicable to man. This subject of sexual selection has been treated at full length in the present work, simply because an opportunity was here first afforded me. I have been struck with the likeness of many of the half-favorable criticisms on sexual selection, with those which appeared at first on natural selection; such as, that it would explain some few details, but certainly was not applicable to the extent to which I have employed it. My conviction of the power of sexual selection remains unshaken; but it is probable, or almost certain, that several of my conclusions will hereafter be found erroneous; this can hardly fail to be the case in the first treatment of a subject. When naturalists have become familiar with the idea of sexual selection, it will, as I believe, be much more largely accepted; and it has already been fully and favorably received by several capable judges.

DOWN, BECKENHAM, KENT,
September, 1874.