

NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE DESCENT OF MAN. By CHARLES DARWIN.
Illustrated. In two volumes. New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1871.

Whatever the reader may think of Darwin's theories regarding the origin of the human family, he can not help but read his works with pleasure and profit. They are storehouses of knowledge regarding animals of all kinds, such as can nowhere else, in so small compass, be found. And then the spirit of the book is so beautiful. We have never had any thing like it before, and the lesson of such a writer in such a temper can not fail to produce a profound impression upon the minds of those whose business it is to discuss the great questions of the age, as well as upon the minds of the common reader.

An idea of the book may be had from the headings of a few chapters.

Chapter I discusses the Evidence of the Descent of Man from some lower form.

Chapter II makes a Comparison of the Mental Powers of Man and Animals.

Chapter IV gives Mr. Darwin's ideas as to the manner of Development of Man from some lower form.

Chapter V goes over the question as to How the Mental and Moral faculties were Developed during Primeval and Civilized Ages.

Something over half of the work is devoted to an exposition of the doctrine of sexual selection, by which is meant the success of certain individuals over others of the same sex in relation to the propagation of the species. A couple of paragraphs showing how the human race may still make great progress by what he calls sexual selection, will be peculiarly interesting to the readers of this journal, as the same views have more than once found expression in these pages.

Mr. Darwin on this subject observes, "Man scans with scrupulous care the character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs before he matches them; but when it comes to his own marriage he rarely or never takes such care. He is impelled by nearly the same motives as are the lower animals when left to their own free choice, though he is in so far superior to them that he highly values mental charms and virtues. On the other hand, he is strongly attracted by mere wealth or rank. Yet he might by selection do something not only for the bodily constitution and frame of his offspring, but for their intellectual and moral qualities. Both sexes ought to refrain from marriage if in any marked degree inferior in body or mind; but such hopes are Utopian, and will never be even partially realized until the laws of inheritance are thoroughly known. All do good service who aid toward this end. When the principles of breeding and of inheritance are better understood, we shall not hear ignorant members of our Legislature rejecting with scorn a plan for ascertaining by an easy method whether or not consanguineous marriages are injurious to man.

The advancement of the welfare of mankind is a most intricate problem: all ought to refrain from marriage who can not avoid abject poverty for their children; for poverty is not only a great evil, but tends to its own increase by leading to recklessness in marriage. On the other hand, as Mr. Galton has remarked, if the prudent avoid marriage, while the reckless marry, the inferior

members will tend to supplant the better members of society. Man, like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence consequent on his rapid multiplication; and if he is to advance still higher he must remain subject to a severe struggle. Otherwise he would soon sink into indolence, and the more highly-gifted men would not be more successful in the battle of life than the less-gifted. Hence our natural rate of increase, though leading to many and obvious evils, must not be greatly diminished by any means. There should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring. Important as the struggle for existence has been and even still is, yet as far as the highest part of man's nature is concerned there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced, either directly or indirectly, much more through the effects of habit, the reasoning powers, instruction, religion, etc., than through natural selection; though to this latter agency the social instincts which afforded the basis for the development of the moral sense may be safely attributed.

To those who are fond of scientific reading on the subjects here treated of, these books will have a peculiar charm. Price \$2.00 per volume.

ON THE GENESIS OF SPECIES. By ST. GEORGE MIVART, F. R. S. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1871.

Those who have read Darwin's great work on the Descent of Man will need also to read this reply to it by Mivart; it being, as yet, the only answer that is considered worthy of the designation. While not so readable nor so full of knowledge as Darwin's book, it certainly makes some serious and pertinent objections to his theories from a purely scientific standpoint, and they have already attracted much attention. The spirit of the book is candid, reasonable, and not dogmatic. It is refreshing to see our men of science discuss the great questions of the day with so much amiability and so little bitterness. By so doing, they are working a good work for the cause of morality and religion.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE. By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. New York: Hurd & Houghton.

The beautiful stories and poems which this eminent writer has given us from time to time, have made us so to know him and love him that we catch eagerly at the story of his life told by himself, and we know before we read that we have a treat before us. The autobiography was first written in 1846, translated by Miss Howett, and published in England. In 1855 it was rewritten by Andersen and expounded, and now on its being translated again into our language, the author extends the work up to the date of 1867, and terminates it with an account of the great festival at Odense, which he looks upon as the crowning honor of his life. The book is brought out in uniform rotation with all of his writings published in the country, and is prefaced by a fine portrait of the author.