

Black wood - April 1871

1871.]

*The Descent of Man.*

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the persons that shall buy goods with these claims for money, written on the pieces of paper which make up some 97 parts out of the 100 of its receipts; but it is only a deciding and determining machine. It never received those 97 hundredths in capital, and it never employs them itself in acquiring the capital which they can purchase. If the City knew what capital is, it would never bemoan the loss of idle goods any more than of so many pebbles; nor would writers like the 'Economist' propagate such empty theories as, that gold never touched in a reserve, and never lent, gave any power of lending, or exerted any action on the rate of discount in the money market. The 'Economist' would never have uttered deliberately such a climax of economical absurdity as to call "the aggregate

sums standing to the credit of various persons in the ledgers of bill-brokers and bankers loanable capital." Limes in ledgers capital!! According to that idea all the debts standing in tradesmen's shop-books must be capital also; and the world regards the utterance of such definitions as crimes on currency! From what treatise of political economy does the 'Economist' derive its definition of capital? How, if the 'Economist' had a class of students to teach, would it be able to define capital in such a way as to include "sums standing to credit in ledgers"? It would surpass our powers to accomplish such a feat. Perhaps the 'Economist' would say that capital and the power to buy capital are the same thing. If that is so, how much science is there in political economy?

## THE DESCENT OF MAN.

A CONSOLATION OF AN OLD MAN.

*Air—"Grandfather."*

*(Baron's Equitar.)*

- "Man comes from a Mammal that lived up a tree,  
And a great coat of hair on his outside had he,  
Very much like the Dromedights we frequently see—  
Which nobody can deny.
- "He had points to his ears, and a tail to his rump,  
To assist him with ease through the branches to jump—  
In some cases quite long, and in some a mere stump—  
Which nobody can deny.
- "This mammal, obtaining from mischievous pranks,  
Was thought worthy in time to be raised from the ranks,  
And with some small aids came to stand on two shanks—  
Which nobody can deny.
- Thus planted, his course he so prudently steered,  
That his hand soon improved and his intellect cleared;  
Then his forehead enlarged and his tail disappeared—  
Which nobody can deny.

- "Tisn't easy to settle when Man became Man ;  
When the Monkey-type stopped and the Human began ;  
But some very queer things were involved in the plan—  
Which nobody can deny.
- " Women plainly had heads and big whiskers at first ;  
While the man supplied milk when the baby was nursed ;  
And some other strong facts I could tell—if I durst—  
Which nobody can deny.
- " Our arboreal sire had a pedigree too :  
The Marsupial system comes here into view ;  
So we'll trace him, I think, to a Great Kangaroo—  
Which nobody can deny.
- " The Kangaroo's parent, perhaps, was a bird ;  
But an *Oreithorhynchus* would not be shared ;  
Then to frogs and strange fishes we back are referred—  
Which nobody can deny."

Thus far Darwin has said : But the root of the Tree,  
Its nature, its name, and what caused it to be,  
Seems a secret to him, just as much as to me—  
Which nobody can deny.

Did it always exist as a great institution ?  
And what made it start on its first evolution ?  
As to this our good friend offers no contribution—  
Which nobody can deny.

Yet I think that if Darwin would make a clean breast,  
Some Botanical views would be frankly confessed,  
And that all *Fish is Grass* would stand boldly expressed—  
Which nobody can deny.

The Loves of the Plants, so deliciously sung,  
Must have softened his heart, when his bosom was young,  
And the Temple of Nature has prompted his tongue—  
Which nobody can deny.

But now if in future good breeding we prize,  
To be cherubs and angels we some day may rise ;  
And, indeed, some sweet angels are now in my eye—  
Which nobody can deny.

If this is our wish, we must act with due care ;  
And in choosing our spouses no pains we should spare,  
But select only those that are wise, good, and fair—  
Which nobody can deny.

Yet however he came by it, Man has a Soul,  
That will not so submit to despotic control,  
As to make Monks and Nuns of three-fourths of the whole—  
Which nobody can deny.

The Bad may be pretty, the Good may be plain ;  
 And sad matches are made from the lure of gain ;  
 So perhaps as we are we shall likely remain—  
 Which nobody can deny.

After all, then, I ask, what's the object in view ?  
 And what practical good from this creed can ensue ?  
 I can't find in it much that's both useful and new—  
 Which nobody can deny.

Our old friend Lucretius\* explained long ago  
 How the fitest survive and the weak are laid low ;  
 And our friends of the Farm must a thing or two know—  
 Which nobody can deny.

I would ne'er take offence at what's honestly meant,  
 Or that truth should be told of our lowly descent ;  
 To be sprung from the dust I am humbly content—  
 Which nobody can deny.

But this groping and guessing may all be mistaken,  
 And in sensitive minds may much trouble awaken,  
 So I'll shut up my book, and go back to my *Stones*†—  
 Which nobody can deny.

\* Lucretius, v. 817-877.

† Certainly the Darwinian theory, though it may be interesting as a theory, is a considerable encroachment on Lucretian principles, which require that no theory should be adopted without an adequate induction from facts much more directed and complete than any that the Darwinians have yet discovered—If, indeed, they have discovered any fact at all that infers the possibility of the transformations which they envisage.

The "Hortus Siccus," the work of old Erasmus Darwin, was more popular in its day, and is less popular now, than it deserves to be. His "Temple of Nature," a subsequent publication, announced in "poorhouse rhyme" nearly the same views of evolution as those now in vogue.

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## THE DESCENT OF MAN.

A CONTINUATION OF AN OLD SONG.

*Air—"Greensleeves."*

*(Darwin loquitur.)*

- "Man comes from a Mammal that lived up a tree,  
And a great coat of hair on his outside had he,  
Very much like the Dreadnaughts we frequently see—  
Which nobody can deny.
- "He had points to his ears, and a tail to his rump,  
To assist him with ease through the branches to jump—  
In some cases quite long, and in some a mere stump—  
Which nobody can deny.
- "This mammal, abstaining from mischievous pranks,  
Was thought worthy in time to be raised from the ranks,  
And with some small ado came to stand on two shanks—  
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 When the Monkey-type stopped and the Human began ;  
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“Women plainly had beards and big whiskers at first ;  
 While the man supplied milk when the baby was nursed ;  
 And some other strong facts I could tell—if I durst—  
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 The Marsupial system comes here into view ;  
 So we'll trace him, I think, to a Great Kangaroo—  
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“The Kangaroo's parent, perhaps, was a bird ;  
 But an Ornithorhyncus would not be absurd :  
 Then to frogs and strange fishes we back are referred—  
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 Or that truth should be told of our lowly descent ;  
 To be sprung from the dust I am humbly content—  
 Which nobody can deny.

But this groping and guessing may all be mistaken,  
 And in sensitive minds may much trouble awaken,  
 So I'll shut up my book, and go back to my *Bacon* †—  
 Which nobody can deny.

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