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NOTE: The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex. New York: Appleton, vol. 1. (F941.1), vol. 2. (F941.2).

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-“The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex,” by Charles Darwin, M. A., F. R. S., etc., published by D. Appleton & Co., is a continuation of the subject which the author broached some years ago in his “Origin of Species,” and which has served to excite controversies of the most violent description in both scientific and theological circles. The theory somewhat hesitatingly advanced in Mr. Darwin's first work, that man is descended from a lower type by means of natural selection, is, in the volume before us, insisted upon and supported by an elaborate array of facts. Mr. Darwin contends not only that man is descended from a lower type, but that all animal nature has had its origin in a very limited number of forms. Indeed, if we accept Mr. Darwin's theory as correct, and go back far enough with our investigations, it is not improbable we may find our original ancestor to have been an oyster, and that some of us are daily in the habit of swallowing a dozen or so of our cousins, some degrees removed, from the half-shell, with pepper-sauce accompaniment. Facts are facts, however; and if we are really descended from a primitive oyster, or, to bring the matter down to a later, although still remote date, from the gorilla, it will be necessary to reconcile ourselves to the relationship, however uncomplimentary it may be to our pride. Indeed, a respectable, well behaved gorilla, if any such there be, might be converted into a more promising member of society than some of the humans with whom we are acquainted, and might put to shame some of his presumably more intellectual relatives. Mr. Darwin's theories with regard to natural selection have been adopted by many of the scientific men of the present day, and the arguments and facts contained in the volume before us will tend to confirm the believers in Darwinism, even if they do not convert its opponents. Whatever opinions may be held with regard to Mr. Darwin's theory, it is certainly one of great interest; and his new work is worthy of the attention of students of natural history and others, if only for the sake of the remarkable array of facts which the author brings forward to support his position. The second part of the volume before us is devoted to the consideration of the curious subject of sexual selection, which will be further discussed in a second volume now in preparation.

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