

stances of infamy we should never have comprehended the meaning of such phrases as "self-sacrifice" or "devotion." The phenomena of social life would have been omitted from the history of the world, and with them the phenomena of ethics and of religion.

The social instincts acquired by man for the good of the community will from the first have given to him some wish to aid his fellows, some feeling of sympathy, and have compelled him to regard their approbation and disapprobation. But as man gradually advanced in intellectual power, and was enabled to trace the remote consequences of his actions; as he acquired sufficient knowledge to reject baneful customs and superstitions; as he regarded more and more, not only the welfare, but the happiness, of his fellow-men; as from habit, following on beneficial experience, instructions, and example, his sympathies became more tender and widely diffused, extending to men of all races, to the imbecile, maimed, and other useless members of society, and finally to the lower animals,—so would the standard of his morality rise higher and higher. As a struggle may sometimes be seen going on between the various instincts of the lower animals, it is not surprising that there should be a struggle in man between his social instincts, with their derived virtues, and his lower, though momentarily stronger, impulses or desires. Looking to future generations, there is no cause to fear that the social instincts will grow weaker, and we may expect that virtuous habits will grow stronger, becoming perhaps fixed by inheritance. In this case, the struggle between our higher and lower impulses will be less severe, and virtue will be triumphant.

**SEXUAL SELECTION AND MAN.**—Sexual selection has, probably, been an important factor in the evolution of man. The sexual struggle is of two kinds; in the one it is between individuals of the same sex, generally the males, in order to drive away or kill their rivals, the females remaining passive; whilst in the other, the struggle is likewise between the individuals of the same sex, in order to excite or charm those of the opposite sex, generally the females which no longer remain passive, but select the more agreeable partners. It seems almost certain, that, if the individuals of one sex were during a long series of generations to prefer pairing with certain individuals of the other sex, characterized in some peculiar manner, the offspring would slowly but surely become modified in the same manner. We may calculate that the greater size, strength, courage, pugnacity, and energy of man, in comparison with woman, were acquired during primeval times, and have subsequently been augmented, chiefly through the contests of the rival males for the possession of females. The greater intellectual vigor and power of invention in man is probably due to natural selection, combined with the inherited effects of habit; for the most able men will have succeeded best in defending and providing for themselves and for their wives and offspring. As far as we can judge, it appears that our male ape-like progenitors acquired their beards as an ornament to charm or excite the opposite sex, and transmitted them only to their male offspring. The females apparently first had their bodies denuded of hair, also as a sexual ornament, but they transmitted this character almost equally to both sexes. It is not improbable that the females were modified in other respects for the same purpose and by the same means; so that women have acquired sweeter voices and became more beautiful than men. Mr. Darwin concludes that of all the causes which have led to the differences in external appearances between the races of man, and to a certain extent between man and the larger animals, sexual selection has been the most efficient.

**"MISSING LINKS."**—The great break in the organic chain between man and his nearest allies, which cannot be bridged over by an extinct or living species, has often been advanced as a grave objection to the belief that man is descended from some lower form; but this objection has really little weight. Sir Chas. Lyell has shown that, in all the vertebrate classes, the discovery of fossil remains has been a very slow and fortuitous process. Nor should it be forgotten that those regions which are the most likely to afford remains connecting man with some extinct ape-like creature, has not as yet been explored by geologists. Asia or Africa, or both, in all probability, constituted the primeval home of early man; hence in those countries, and in those only, is it likely that any records of our semi-human ancestors exist, or will ever be discovered. But no portion of those continents have, as yet, been explored for fossils of primitive man, or of the types and species anterior to man; consequently, none have ever been brought to light.

**SUPREMACY OF MAN.**—Man has not only risen superior to natural selection himself, but he is actually able to take away some of that power from nature which before his appearance she universally exercised. We can anticipate the time when the earth will produce only cultivated plants and domestic animals; when man's selection shall have supplanted natural selection; and when the ocean will be the only domain in which that power can be exerted, which for countless cycles of ages ruled supreme over all the earth. If it be enquired, whether man too must change in form, and become developed into some other animal, as different from his present self as he is from the gorilla or chimpanzee, the evident reply is, that such will not be the case; for no change of conditions is conceivable, which will render any important alteration of his form and organization so universally useful and necessary to him as to give those possessing it always the best chance of surviving, and thus lead to the development of a new species, genus, or higher group of man. We know that far greater changes of conditions and of his entire environment have been undergone by man than any other highly organized animal could survive unchanged, and have been met by mental, not corporeal adaptation. The difference of

habits, of food, clothing, weapons, and enemies, between savage and civilized man, is enormous. Difference in bodily form and structure there is practically none, except a slight increased size of brain, corresponding to his higher mental development. We have every reason to believe, then, that man may have existed and may continue to exist, through a series of geological epochs which shall see all other forms of animal life again and again changed; while he himself remains unchanged, except as regards the head and face, as immediately connected with the organ of the mind, and as being the medium of expressing the most refined emotions of his nature. In the future of the human race it must inevitably follow, that the higher—the more intellectual and moral—must displace the lower and more degraded races; and the power of natural selection, still acting on his mental organization, must ever lead to the more perfect adaptation of man's higher faculties to the conditions of surrounding nature, and to the exigencies of the social state. While his external form will probably ever remain unchanged, except in the development of that perfect beauty which results from a healthy and well-organized body, refined and ennobled by the highest intellectual faculties and sympathetic emotions, his mental constitution may continue to advance and improve, till the world is inhabited by a single nearly homogeneous race, no individual of which will be inferior to the noblest specimen of existing humanity.

Our progress towards such a result is very slow, but it still is a progress. Despite the fact, that, among civilized nations of the present day, it is the mediocre, if not the low, both as regards morality and intelligence, who succeed best in life and multiply fastest, there is yet an advance—on the whole a steady and permanent one—both in influence on public opinion of a high morality, and in the general desire for intellectual elevation.

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WE CANNOT forbear to express our cordial and sincere admiration of these words of the *Toronto Freethought Journal* for February, respecting "Clerical Scandals": "We have received numerous communications giving detailed accounts of the misdoings of ministers of the 'gospel' and other prominent members of Christian churches who have strayed from the path of virtue. We have consigned all such communications to the 'waste-basket,' and, so far as the *Journal* is concerned, to oblivion. Such descriptions are necessarily coarse and vulgar, and we shall continue to rigidly exclude them from our pages. Apart from their coarseness, however, we object to giving such scandal prominence. Christians claim that their religion makes them better, more virtuous and honest than they could possibly be without it. By carefully nothing and giving prominence to every christian's 'fall from grace' we acknowledge that their assertions are true; that their Christianity ought to make them better than other men; that they ought to stand on a higher moral plane than their neighbors; that had they lived in accordance with the teachings of the Bible they could not have erred; and that consequently it was the loss of their religion which occasioned their fall. A man cannot fall unless he is upon an elevation, unless he occupies a more or less lofty position to fall from. We are not disposed, even by implication, to make such an acknowledgment." In such sentiments as these every lofty-minded liberal must take unfeigned delight. They put to shame the vile disposition which gloats triumphantly over "clerical scandals."—*Boston Index*.

*The Freethought Journal.*—The freethinkers have resolved to publish their *Journal* monthly instead of weekly as at first intended. In the February number now before us, under the head of "Clerical Scandal," the *Journal* says:—"We have received numerous communications giving detailed accounts of the misdoings of ministers of the 'gospel' and other prominent members of Christian churches who have strayed from the paths of virtue. We have consigned all such communications to the 'waste-basket' and, so far as the *Journal* is concerned, to oblivion. Such descriptions are necessarily coarse and vulgar, and we shall continue to rigidly exclude them from our pages. Apart from their coarseness, however, we object to giving such scandal prominence." In view of the recent number of such social scandals, and the prominence given them by the press of America and the Dominion and the injurious effects the publications have upon the community the *Journal* deserves the thanks of its readers for its moral lesson, and the magnanimous course pursued by refusing publicity to these scandals, instead of seeking the advantage of professing Christians through their erring members, speaks well for the high tone of its promoters and editors.—*News, L'Original*.