

STIRPICULTURE

OR

THE ASCENT OF MAN.

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Mr. President and Gentlemen :

The subject I propose to bring before you to-night is one that should command the most marked attention of every individual and every community ; but, mayhap, from want of knowledge, it is rarely mentioned and receives but little studied attention, and if I can elicit a more extended and careful study of stirpiculture, this paper will accomplish its mission. Since " the highest study of mankind is man," then the culture of the race and the study of the many influences which modify its character,—of which Heredity is most potent,—should demand especial care. But do we not find that it is practically ignored and the most careful application, given to what will minister to *profit* or *pleasure* ?

It is a well known fact that Hereditary Proclivities are so sure to appear in the offspring that the greatest attention is given by the stock-man to the racial peculiarities of his stock, and his success in weeding out inferior traits and perfecting those most desired is so certain that it is a common saying that " any favored trait can be developed by the proper study of Heredity."

We may descend the scale of life and find nearly as much attention given and as much success obtained in improving the races of dogs, cats, rabbits, pigeons, bees, &c., and, getting still lower down, we find that similar methods give similar results in the vegetable kingdom.

Is the highest type of animated nature an exception to the general law or is there no need of judgment in the development of the human race ?

The answers are self-evident.

Let us consider the " Descent of Man," so that, " judging of the future by the past," we may be able to glean suggestions for our guidance.

Two diverse ideas obtain among those who have devoted most time to this subject: the one we may term the *new material or development theory*, the other, the *old Biblical or the Theological*. The latter swayed the opinions of men until a few years back when Darwin gave to the world the result of his careful and life-long investigations, since which time the scientific mind has been learning very much in this direction and many acrimonious discussions have resulted.