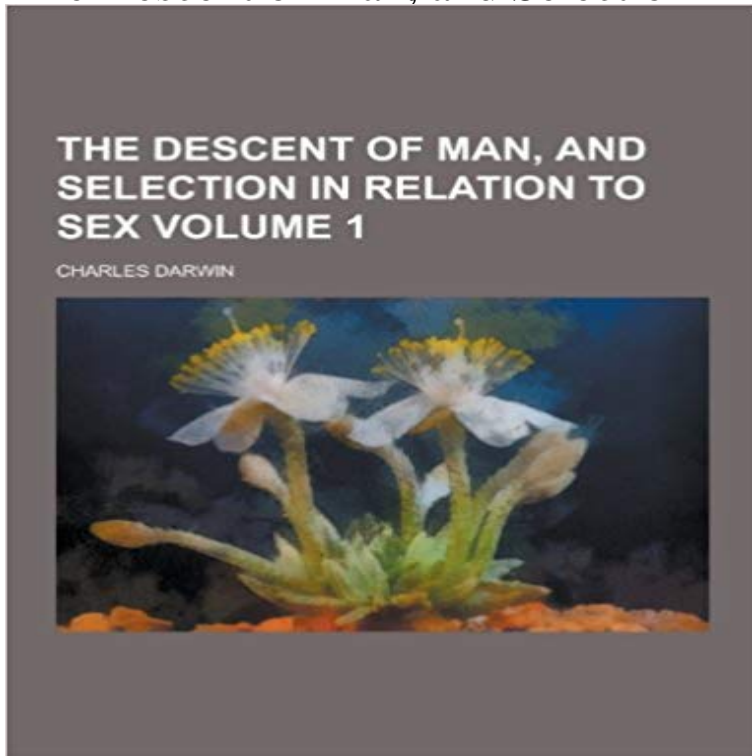


The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex Volume 1



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1872 edition. Excerpt: ... * been important, they would long ago have been either fixed and preserved, or eliminated. In this respect man resembles those forms, called by naturalists protean or polymorphic, which have remained extremely variable, owing, as it seems, to their variations being of an indifferent nature, and consequently to their having escaped the action of natural selection. We have thus far been baffled in all our attempts to account for the differences between the races of man; but there remains one important agency, namely, Sexual Selection, which appears to have acted as powerfully on man as on many other animals. I do not intend to assert that sexual selection will account for all the differences between the races. An unexplained residuum is left, about which we can in our ignorance only say that, as individuals are continually born with, for instance, heads a little rounder or narrower, and with noses a little longer or shorter, such slight differences might become fixed and uniform, if the unknown agencies which induced them were to act in a more constant manner, aided by long-continued intercrossing. Such modifications come under the provisional class, alluded to in our fourth chapter, which for the want of a better term have been called spontaneous variations. Nor do I pretend that the effects of sexual selection can be indicated with scientific precision; but it can be shown that it would be an inexplicable fact if man had not been modified by this agency, which has acted so powerfully on innumerable animals, both high and low in the scale. It can further be shown that the differences between the races of man, as in color, hairiness, form of features, etc., are of the nature which it might have been

expected would have been acted on by...

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