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Charles Darwin

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**The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex**

In his Introduction to this book, Darwin reveals that for many years he had no intention of publishing his notes on the descent of man, 'as I thought that I should thus only add to the prejudices against my views'. By 1871, however, he felt that his fellow scientists, 'especially the younger and rising naturalists', would show a greater openness of mind to arguments for natural selection, even when taken to their logical conclusion and applied to the descent of man from the apes – the aspect of his theory which had been so widely mocked since the notorious question asked by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce at the British Association Oxford debate of 1860: was it through his grandmother or his grandfather that Thomas Huxley, Darwin's champion, considered himself descended from a monkey? In fact, the book's focus on the area of sexual selection and the evolutionary importance of secondary sexual characteristics across the whole of the animal kingdom meant that the book was received without the public outrage that Darwin had feared.

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# The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex

VOLUME 1

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