

Charles Darwin, Letter to Charles Kingsley, 6 February 1862

My dear M^r Kingsley

I thank you sincerely for your letter*. I have been glad to hear about the Duke of Argyle, for ever since the Glasgow Brit. Assoc. when he was President, I have been his ardent admirer. What a fine thing it is to be a Duke: nobody but a Duke, the first time he geologised would have found a new formation; & the first time he botanised a new lichen to Britain.

With respect to the pigeons, your remarks show me clearly (without seeing specimens, though I thank you for the kind offer) that the birds shot were the Stock Dove or *C. Oenas*, long confounded with the Cushat & Rock-pigeon. It is in some respects intermediate in appearance & habits; as it breeds in holes in trees & in rabbit-warrens. It is so far intermediate that it quite justifies what you say on all the forms being descendants of one.

That is a grand & almost awful question on the genealogy of man to which you allude. It is not so awful & difficult to me, as it seems to be most, partly from familiarity & partly, I think, from having seen a good many Barbarians. I declare the thought, when I first saw in T. del Fuego a naked painted, shivering hideous savage, that my ancestors must have been somewhat similar beings, was at that time as revolting to me, nay more revolting than my present belief that an incomparably more remote ancestor was a hairy beast. Monkeys have downright good hearts, at least sometimes, as I could show, if I had space. I have long attended to this subject, & have materials for a curious essay on Human expression, & a little on the relation in mind of man to the lower animals. How I should be abused if I were to publish such an essay! I hope & rather expect that Sir C. Lyell will enter in his new Book on the relations of men & other animals; but I do not know what his recent intentions are.

It is a very curious subject, that of the old myths; but you naturally with your classical & old-world knowledge lay more stress on such beliefs, than I do with all my profound ignorance. Very odd those accounts in India of the little hairy men! It is very true what you say about the higher races of men, when high enough, replacing & clearing off the lower races. In 500 years how the Anglo-saxon race will have spread & exterminated whole nations; & in consequence how much the Human race, viewed as a unit, will have risen in rank. Man is clearly an old-world, not an American, species; & if ever intermediate forms between him & unknown *Quadrumana* are found, I should expect they would be found in Tropical countries, probably islands. But what a chance if ever they are discovered: look at the French beds with the celts, & no fragment of a human bone. It is indeed, as you say absurd to expect a history of the early stages of man in prehistoric times.

I hope that I have not wearied you with my scribbling & with many thanks for your letter, I remain with much respect

Yours sincerely

Charles Darwin

As you seem to care for all departments of n. History, I send a pamphlet with a rather curious physiological case.

* see below

Charles Kingsley, Letter to Charles Darwin, 31 January 1862

My dear M^r. Darwin

I have just returned from Lord Ashburton's, where the Duke of Argyle, the Bishop of Oxford, & I, have naturally talked much about you & your book. As for the Bp. you know what he thinks—& more important, you know what he knows. The Duke is a very diff^t. mood; calm, liberal, & ready to hear all reason; though puzzled as every one must be, by a hundred new questions which you have opened.

What struck us on you & your theory, was, the shooting in the park of a pair of "blue Rocks", w^h. I was called to decide on. There were several Men there who knew blue Rocks. The Duke said that the specimen was diff^t from the Blue Rock of the Hebrides— Young Baring that it was diff^t from the B. R. of Gibraltar, & of his Norfolk Rabbit warrens (w^h. I don't believe from the specimens I have seen, to be a B. R. at all, but a stunted Stock dove, w^h. breeds in rabbit holes.), & I could hardly swear that this was a B. R. (as the keeper held) till I saw, but very weakly developed, the black bars on the wing coverts.

Do you care enough about the matter to have a specimen of the bird? He comes in 2 & 3^s. (from the Isle of Wight, I suppose) to the heart of S. Hants, & feeds on dry berries—

My own view is—& I coolly stated it, fearless of consequences—that the specimen before me was only to be explained on your theory, & that Cushat, Stock doves & Blue Rock, had been once all one species—& I found—to shew how your views are steadily spreading—that of 5 or 6 men, only one regarded such a notion as absurd. If you want a specimen, I can get you one at once.

I want now to bore you on another matter. This great gulf between the quadrumana & man; & the absence of any record of species intermediate between man & the ape. It has come home to me with much force, that while we deny the existence of any such, the legends of most nations are full of them. Fauns, Satyrs, Inui, Elves, Dwarfs—we call them one minute mythological personages, the next conquered inferior races—& ignore the broad fact, that they are always represented as more bestial than man, & of violent sexual passion.

The mythology of every white race, as far as I know, contains these creatures, & I (who believe that every myth has an original nucleus of truth) think the fact very important.

The Inuus of the old Latins is obscure: but his name is from inire—sexual violence

The Faun of the Latins (or Romans, I dont know w^h.) has a monkey face, & hairy hind legs & body— the hind feet are traditionally those of a goat, the goat being the type of lust.

The Satyr of the Greeks is completely human, save an ape-face & a short tail—

The Elves Fairies & Dwarfs puzzle me, the 2 first being represented, originally, as of great beauty, the Elves dark, & the Fairies fair; & the Dwarfs as cunning magicians, & workers in metal— They may be really conquered aborigines.

The Hounuman, monkey God of India, & his monkey armies, who take part with the Brahminæ invaders, are now supposed to be a slave negro race, who joined the new Conquerors against their old masters. To me they point to some similar semi-human race. That such creatures sh^d. have become divine, when they became rare, & a fetish worship paid to them—as happened in all the cases I have mentioned, is consonant with history— & is perhaps the only explanation of fetish-worship. The fear of a terrible, brutal, & mysterious creature, still lingering in the forests.

That they should have died out, by simple natural selection, before the superior white race, you & I can easily understand.

That no skulls, &^c. of them have been found, is a question w^h. may bother us when the recent deposits of Italy & Greece have been as well searched as those of England. Till then, it concerns no man.

I hope that you will not think me dreaming— To me, it seems strange that we are to deny that any Creatures intermediate between man & the ape ever existed, while our forefathers of every race, assure us that they did— As for having no historic evidence of them—How can you have historic evidence in pre-historic times? Our race was strong enough to kill them out while it was yet savage— We are not niggers, who can coexist till the 19th. century with gorillas a few miles off. I do not say that this notion is true, as a fact: but I do say that it has to be looked to, & weighed patiently quantum valeat.

At least, believe me

Ever, differing now, & now agreeing

Yours most faithfully

C Kingsley

Eversley