

## THE LEATHER BOTTËL.

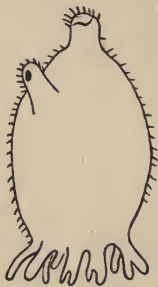
## A DARWINIAN DITTY.

[For the better understanding of this "ditty," in case it should not be self-interpreting, we prefix to it two Extracts, one from Mr Darwin's 'Descent of Man,' and the other from Dr Alleyne Nicholson's 'Introductory Text-Book of Zoology,' with a relative woodcut, borrowed from Dr Nicholson's work, in which cut, as being a family portrait of our ancestor (according to Mr Darwin), our readers cannot fail to feel a strong interest. We suggest that the word *Ascidian*, if not spelled *Askidian*, ought, at least, to be pronounced so.]

"The most ancient progenitors in the kingdom of the Vertebrata, at which we are able to obtain an obscure glance, apparently consisted of a group of marine animals, resembling the larvæ of existing *Ascidians*.

"These animals probably gave rise to a group of fishes, . . . these to the *Simiadæ*. The *Simiadæ* then branched off into two great stems, the New World and Old World monkeys; and from the latter, at a remote period, Man, the wonder and glory of the universe, proceeded. Thus we have given to man a pedigree of prodigious length, but not, it may be said, of noble quality."—*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. By Charles Darwin, M.A., F.R.S., &c.; vol. i. p. 212, 213.

"**TUNICATA.**—This class includes a class of animals not at all familiarly known, and mostly of small size. They are often called *Ascidians* (Gr. *askos*, a wine-skin), from the resemblance which many of them exhibit in shape to a two-necked jar or bottle (see fig.)—The two orifices in the outer leathery case or 'test' of the *Tunicata* lead into the interior of the animal, and are used for the admission and expulsion of sea-water; and by their means the animal both breathes and obtains food."—*Introductory Text-Book of Zoology*. By H. Alleyne Nicholson, M.D., &c.



## THE LEATHER BOTTÈL.

AIR—*The Leather Bottèl.*

HOW many wondrous things there be  
 Of which we can't the reason see!  
 And this is one, I used to think,  
 That most men like a drop of drink.  
 But here comes Darwin with his plan,  
 And shows the true Descent of Man:  
 And that explains it all full well,  
 For man—was—once—a leather bottèl!

There are Mollusca rather small,  
 That Naturalists Ascidia call;  
 Who, being just a bag-like skin,  
 Subsist on water pouring in:  
 And these you'll find, if you will seek,  
 Derive their name from Heathen Greek;  
 For Scott and Scapula show full well  
 That As-kos-means—a leather bottèl.

Now Darwin proves as clear as mud,  
That, endless ages ere the Flood,  
The Coming Man's primeval form  
Was simply an Ascidian worm : \*  
And having then the habit got  
Of passing liquor down his throat,  
He keeps it still, and shows full well  
That Man—was—once—a leather bottèl.

When Bacchus' feasts came duly round,  
Athenian peasants beat the ground ;  
And danced and leapt to ease their toil,  
'Mid leather bottles smeared with oil :  
From which they slid with broad grimace,  
And falling, filled with mirth the place :  
And so they owned and honoured well  
Their great—grand—sire—the leather bottèl. †

The toper loves to sit and swill  
Of wine, or grog, or beer, his fill ;  
And, as he doth but little eat,  
It serves him both for drink and meat :

\* Worm is here used for larva.

† See Virgil's *Georgics*, ii. 380.

But don't, I pray, be too strait-laced,  
 Or blame this pure Ascidian taste :  
 For Darwin's theory shows full well,  
 The to-per-is—a leather bottèl.

The Dean of Christ-Church does not shrink  
 To give five reasons we should drink :  
 "Good wine, a friend, or being dry,  
 Or lest we should be by-and-by :"  
 Then adds the fifth in humorous sport,  
 As "any other reason" for't :  
 But all his reasoning shows full well,  
 The Dean-was-just—a leather bottèl ! \*

Nay, those who fain strong drink would stop,  
 Don't say, we should not drink a drop ;  
 But water, milk, or *eau sucrée*,  
 We're free to tipple all the day :  
 Sam Johnson's self, as you may see,  
 Drank many myriad cups of tea :

\* Dean Aldrich's well-known Catch,

"If all be true that I do think,  
 There are five reasons we should drink,"

is a translation of the following Latin lines, which Father Sirmond, the Jesuit, "quoique fort sobre," delighted to repeat :—

"Si bene commemorari causæ sunt quinque bibendi ;  
 Hospitis adventus ; præsens sitis ; atque futura ;  
 Et vini bonitas ; et quælibet altera causa."—*Menagiana*, i. 172.

And all this drinking shows full well  
That man's-at-best—a leather bottèl.

“The thirsty earth drinks up the rain,”  
The plants, too, drink the moistened plain :  
“The sea itself, which, one would think,  
Should have but little need for drink,  
Drinks twice ten thousand rivers up ;”  
While beasts and fishes share the cup :  
The Sun, too, drinks, the Moon as well ;  
So Na-ture's-all—a leather bottèl.\*

I hope even Darwin don't say Nay,  
When asked at times to wet his clay :  
And I for one would drink his health,  
And wish him sense and wit and wealth ;  
And if good liquor he doth brew,  
I'll drink to old Erasmus too :  
And gladly join to show full well  
That man-is-still—a leather bottèl.†

\* Altered from Cowley's Anacreontics.

† Erasmus Darwin, mentioned in the last verse, was, we believe, the grandfather of the present distinguished Naturalist. The germ of the “Darwinian theory” is, we consider, much more certainly to be found in the Doctor's posthumous poem of the Temple of Nature, than the origin of man in the Ascidian larva, or leather bottèl.