

## IV.

MR. CHARLES DARWIN, in his "Origin of Species," very briefly called attention to the fact that his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, author of the "Botanical Garden" and other once-famous books in prose and verse, had proposed a theory of evolution, earlier than Lamarck's, founded on the same principle of spontaneous energy or action from within the organism, selecting among the influences of its environment and making use of them for its own development. A German naturalist, Dr. Krause, was led by this hint to examine the writings of the elder Darwin, and gave a short account of his inquiries<sup>1</sup> in the German periodical "Kosmos," of February, 1879. The theory itself Dr. Krause looks upon as rather fanciful than solid, though in comparison with the older view of a fore-ordained creation it deserved a higher appreciation than it has received. Now that science, and pre-eminently German science, has taught us to regard freedom and purpose even in man himself as an illusion, we are obliged, he thinks, to consider any attempt to revive these views as showing "a weakness of thought, and a mental anachronism which no one can envy," — a verdict which, with all due respect to German science, we need not regard as final. The interest of the book, however, does not depend mainly upon Dr. Krause's essay, but upon the extremely entertaining account of his ancestor's life which Mr. Darwin has prefixed to it, and which occupies the larger part of the volume. From family letters and traditions he has given a lifelike sketch of the somewhat crabbed yet generous, intelligent, and vivacious old physician, — scholar, practitioner, and man of the world, — a typical figure of the time. A photograph, apparently from a contemporary portrait of him, given at the beginning, entirely corresponds with this character.

<sup>1</sup> Erasmus Darwin. By Ernst Krause. Translated from the German by W. S. Dallas. With a preliminary notice by Charles Darwin. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1880. 12mo. pp. iv. & 216.