

Apotheosis of the Worm.

Dr. Charles Darwin has written a work which is creating a profound sensation in scientific circles. He has been studying the common earth-worm for over thirty years, and has come to the conclusion that mankind is more indebted to that loathsome, wriggling little creature than to any other race of the inferior orders of creation. The earth, according to Darwin, would be a desert were it not for the worm. Its value is that it eats dirt and turns it into vegetable mold. There are on an average on every acre of ground over 57,000 worms. These eat and digest from eight to sixteen tons of soil per acre in the course of the year. Whatever passes through the intestinal canal of the worm becomes vegetable mold, and without this mold there would be no crops and no increase of grain or the animals which feed upon the products of the soil. Nor is this all. The worm is the preserver of the memorials of the past. Its mission is to cover naked surfaces with vegetable mold. The deserted cities and memorials of the past are first hidden from sight by the *ejecta* of the worm. Then comes the dust and the sand storm and the accretions from outside of our atmosphere. Troy is two hundred feet underground, and it took three thousand years to cover it with so much soil, but the earth-worm is the great sexton who buries the monuments of the past out of sight. Yet this wriggling, loathsome creature is one of the most degraded and imperfect organisms known to the naturalists. It has no brain, no organs of vision, cannot hear, and has no sense of smell. It has a certain amount of intelligence, and knows enough to get out of the sunlight. But, notwithstanding its deficiencies, it is the greatest benefactor not only to man but to the other superior animals. It may comfort fishermen to know that the worm they use in angling has but little nervous sensibility, and cannot be said to suffer pain when impaled on the fish-hook. It will not do hereafter to despise the worm, for, as a London paper well says, "It from this time forth will wear the blue ribbon of science."