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CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN.

OBITUARY NOTICE.

To WRITE an obituary notice of so great and so well-known a man as the late Mr. Darwin seems to be almost a work of supererogation, but we cannot let his death pass without reminding our readers of some of the work so quietly, yet so successfully, accomplished by him who was at once the most modest, and probably the greatest, naturalist who ever lived.

Mr. Darwin was the son of Robert Waring Darwin, F.R.S., a physician at Shrewsbury, his mother being a daughter of the celebrated Josiah Wedgwood. His grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, was in his time much celebrated as a scientific worker and poet, he also being a Fellow of the Royal Society. It may be said that the very teaching of descent of Mr. Darwin was exemplified in himself, and that in him was inherited his ancestor's ability and scientific tastes, but to be amplified and strengthened.

The Rev. Dr. Butler, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, was Mr. Darwin's schoolmaster at Shrewsbury School. Following the example of his grandfather, he went, in 1825, to Edinburgh University. Here he was much interested in marine zoology, and in 1826 read, before the Plinian Society in that city, which was at the time one of the chief literary debating clubs, probably his first scientific paper, on the ova of *Flustra*, one of the Polyzoa. Having left the northern classic city, Mr. Darwin next went to Cambridge, attaching himself to Christ's College, where, in 1831, he took his Bachelor's degree. In those days, when scientific study was

of little avail in helping a man towards his university degrees, Mr. Darwin was too much occupied with biological work to obtain distinction in the calendar, but in 1837 he obtained his M.A. In 1877, however, when the former student at Christ's had become the greatest naturalist of the age, Cambridge tardily conferred on him her Honorary Doctorate of Laws.

In his youth, it is said, Mr. Darwin was attached to field sports, fox-hunting among them. It was possibly during this period of outdoor exercise that much of the acute observation of natural objects, which he afterwards developed, had its foundation.

Mr. Darwin's natural modesty made the future intellectual giant, in his early manhood, but little known, and then only to a small circle of friends. They, however, soon discovered his exceptional talents, and when the Hon. Captain, afterwards celebrated Admiral, Fitzroy took command of the surveying vessels, 'Adventure' and 'Beagle,' young Darwin was selected to accompany the latter vessel as naturalist to the expedition, which sailed on the 27th December, 1831. Nor was Mr. Darwin in this work simply a hireling, for he received no remuneration, and even contributed his own share of the expense in the four years' voyage. This was not all, for he amassed fine collections, a great part of which, on his return, he freely gave and distributed amongst those specialists who were interested in various branches of Natural History. The results were published between 1839 and 1842 in official form, but edited by Mr. Darwin himself, with special remarks on the habits of animals from his own pen. In this work he was assisted by Professor Owen, Mr. Bell, Mr. Waterhouse, and others. The country chiefly visited on this voyage was the coast of South America, from Buenos Ayres through the Straits of Magellan to Valparaiso. His observations were, however, much extended, and included the Galapagos, Australia, and many other places visited by the ships in their circumnavigation. As a result of this voyage Mr. Darwin's name will be handed down to posterity in North Australia at Port Darwin, while in Tierra del Fuego are also named after him a mountain and a sound. It was not, however, all happiness with the subject of this memoir during his protracted voyage, for Mr. Darwin suffered almost constantly from sea-sickness, which in his case became chronic, and even in

long after years, when far from the rolling billows which had formerly tormented him, his old enemy would return as though he were again at sea. In 1839 was published his account of the expedition, the well-known and even now popular, 'Journal of a Naturalist.' It is needless to refer to that which we suppose has been perused by all our readers.

The first really original work of Mr. Darwin's was published in 1842, being his 'Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs.' This was followed at intervals by other volumes, all of which are standard works. Amongst these was a paper, soon after his return, 'On the Formation of Vegetable Mould,' from observations commenced some time previously, and these culminated in one of his latest published works on 'Earthworms,' which caused at the time of its issue so much interest, even in circles who take little heed of scientific matters.

The great work amongst the many which have appeared from the industrious mind of this great author, and the one by which he will be best known in posterity, is his 'Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection.' When first issued it was received by many with positive horror, and was generally decried, but happily Mr. Darwin lived long enough to see his masterpiece the accepted doctrine amongst naturalists generally, and his followers, from being counted by tens, to be enumerated by tens of thousands, all over the civilised world. It is impossible to know how far the influence of the train of thought propounded in that volume has extended. New forms and methods of study in Natural Sciences emanated. Students became more methodical, and with a more settled plan in their work. The embryology of various animals has become of the utmost interest, and we may say generally that the teachings of Darwin have directly or indirectly influenced the present system of all scientific work.

To the readers of this magazine some of his works especially appeal, such as his 'Insectivorous Plants,' 'Fertilisation of Orchids,' &c.

After the protracted voyage of discovery, which was the great event in an otherwise quiet life, and which was the cause of a long period of broken health and patient suffering, Mr. Darwin settled at Down, leading the life of a country squire to all outward appearance. He was a magistrate of the county of Kent. Shortly before taking up his residence at Down he married his

cousin, Miss Emma Wedgwood, their family consisting of five sons and two daughters. His son, Mr. Francis Darwin, latterly acted as his father's literary secretary and almost constant companion. He also bids fair to continue to a fourth generation that scientific ability which has characterised his ancestors.

In personal habits Mr. Darwin was of the simplest, retiring to rest at ten, and up at five to his beloved work. He seldom left the grounds surrounding his house even for a stroll in the adjoining village. His modesty was such that he never seemed to realise that he had done great or exceptional work. Scientific honours, of course, came thick and numerous. He was a Fellow of the Royal and Linnean Societies, and either honorary or corresponding member of nearly every leading scientific society in the world. He was an original member of the Entomological Society of London. But it seems disappointing that in his own country his ability was never recognised by title or distinction from his sovereign, although, after all, this might have been distasteful to one of such simple tastes.

The Linnean Society is to be congratulated upon having obtained the last, and fortunately the best, portrait of Mr. Darwin, which is painted in oil by Mr. John Collier, and only completed a few weeks ago. It will probably be hung in this year's Academy Exhibition, and is altogether a most pleasing likeness.

Born at Shrewsbury, February 12th, 1809, Mr. Darwin died at his residence at Down, near Beckenham, Kent, April 19th, 1882, in the 74th year of his age. His death was sudden and somewhat unexpected. It was known that he had long suffered from weak action of the heart, but he was engaged at his favourite studies even up to the day before he died, and remained quite conscious up to within a quarter of an hour of the time when he closed his long and memorable life as peacefully as if in sleep. So ended the career of a man who in future generations will be compared with the greatest minds, even to Socrates and the oldest philosophers.

J. T. C.

April 20th, 1882.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing it has been decided that Mr. Darwin shall be buried in Westminster Abbey, where will be conducted a funeral of the greatest simplicity. His resting-