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#### DEATH OF DR. CHARLES DARWIN.

The death of Dr. Charles R. Darwin removes from the ranks of scientific men one who, more perhaps than any one of the present century, is entitled to the credit of having revolutionized the particular science which he took in hand. Not that Dr. Darwin's theories are by any means universally recognised as scientific facts, or even that they are by the majority of scientific men held as incontrovertibly proved. But the method of this great naturalist undoubtedly more nearly approached to the perfect mode of treating the study of zoology than that of any naturalist who has ever lived; and what is to the general public perhaps a still greater claim for admiration and sympathy is that Dr. Darwin, in spite of all the bitter controversy which was continually gathering around not only his theories but his own personal views, universally treated his opponents with consideration and respect, and demonstrated completely his sincerity and sole regard for truth.

Charles Robert Darwin was born at the town of Shrewsbury in February, 1809. His grandfather was the celebrated Dr. Erasmus Darwin, F.R.S., a man of perhaps equal breadth of mind with that of his illustrious grandson, but the value of whose services as a scientist was very much impaired by the tendency which he had to poetise all the science of which he treated. He was a physician by profession, and practised at Lichfield, the historical birth place of Dr. Johnson, where his duties did not prevent his devoting much time both to zoology and to social philosophy. His "Botanic Garden" and "Origin of Society" were books which, through their attractive style, found their way into the hands of many readers previously but little inclined for scientific reading.

The mother of Charles Darwin was a daughter of the celebrated Josiah Wedgwood, the originator of the English artistic pottery ware; but his tastes were never directed to the study of art, being apparently entirely inherited from his father's side. Dr. Robert Waring Darwin, F.R.S., was a physician of some eminence, and left his son some property, besides giving him the benefit of his extensive erudition. After a grammar school education at Shrewsbury, under Dr. Butler, young Darwin went to Edinburgh University for two years, and subsequently to Christ's Church College, Cambridge, where he obtained the degrees of B.A. and M.A.

When the surveying expedition to the Southern Pacific in H.M.S. Beagle was planned under the leadership of Captain Fitzroy in 1831, it was proposed that a naturalist should accompany the ship, and the captain agreed to share his cabins with any gentleman who should be chosen. Charles Darwin applied, and offered to go without salary, provided he were allowed

to retain possession of the collection which he should make. After circumnavigating the globe he put together an account of his researches, which was so interesting and instructive as to attract the notice of the scientific world. Northern Australia contains a memento of his presence on this expedition in the name of Port Darwin, which was adopted in compliment to him. Not long before starting on this expedition he had married his cousin, Miss Emma Wedgwood; and as he had inherited considerable property both on his father's and on his mother's side, he was enabled, on returning to England, to settle down in a pleasant estate in Kent, where he prosecuted his studies with great assiduity. Geology first engaged his attention, and the result of his studies was seen in three works on coral reefs, volcanic islands, and the South American continent, the last of which was issued in 1846. The next work of Darwin's, namely, the "Monograph of the Family Cirripedia," which was issued by the Ray Society in 1851-3, is the one by which those who are intimate with biological methods estimate his powers. The functions of nutrition and methods of acquiring food were so clearly and beautifully demonstrated as to lead to an entire reconstruction of the notions previously entertained regarding this interesting family of animals. Yet it is by his next large work, namely, the "Origin of Species," that the general public know him best; and as the book has been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, and several other languages, it is evident that it has been widely thought of and discussed. The main theory propounded in this philosophical treatise is often misunderstood. Starting from the two facts of the development of special functional powers in the individual and of their transmission by heredity, he asserted that, granting a sufficiently long period of time, these two facts would certainly lead to an indefinite widening of the gaps between different families of the animal kingdom. Four or five families of animals originally identical within the limits of the various groups, but acquiring special powers and developing special functions according as they were influenced by their surroundings, and then transmitting these powers and functions to be still further strengthened or intensified by their posterity, would, according to this theory, be sufficient to account for the existence of the endless variety of form and nature to be seen in the animal kingdom. Great scientists, such as Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist, fought shy of the theory at first, but on the completion of the work they almost to a man gave in their acquiescence. Darwin never attempted to prove that all the animal kingdom is descended from an inanimate germ or lump of protoplasm; nor did he assert that man is lineally descended from the monkey. These are the opinions usually ascribed to him, but continually disowned by him. The later works written by the eminent naturalist were all compiled with the object of showing that the qualities which are to be found in one section of the animate world are usually to be found either developed or undeveloped in some other section. The treatise "On the Fertilization of Orchids" was followed by "Domesticated Animals and Cultivated Plants," and in both of these works much light was thrown upon the curious interdependence of plants and animals, the former being dependent upon some of the latter for their fertilization, and actually altering

their form in order to suit the habits of the animals, while the latter are dependent on the plants for their food.

In 1871, and again in 1874, appeared the "Descent of Man and Selection in relation to Sex," in which it is inferred that man is descended from an animal, in form somewhat resembling the ape, though what were its qualities in other respects the author does not venture to conjecture. Since then he has written on "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals," "Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants," "Insectivorous Plants," "Vegetable Fertilization," and "Different Forms of Flowers in Plants of the Same Species." The distinctions which Dr. Darwin received were the membership of many scientific bodies, the Royal and Copley Medals from the Royal Society, and the Wollaston Medal from the Geological Society. He was a knight of the Prussian Order Pour le mérite, an M.D. of Leyden, and LL.D. of Cambridge, and was likewise corresponding member of the French and Viennese Academies of Science. He is described as a man of vivacious wit, though subject to occasional periods of prostration from sickness. His brow was massive, his eyebrows protruding, and his eyes quick and keen; but around the features which surmounted his flowing white beard played an expression of happy contentment which was always specially noted by his friends. All his family, both sons and daughters, have inherited far more than the usual amount of intellectual ability and have distinguished themselves in various walks of life; so that for the fourth generation his genealogical history exhibits a striking illustration of that doctrine of heredity to which he always pointed as the true key to the study of development.