

RECORD: Anon. 1882. [Obituary] The death of Charles Darwin. *The Inter Ocean* (Illinois), (22 April), p. 12.

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[page] 12

Charles R. Darwin, more than any other thinker of his time, made men think and talk. From the very first he interested all classes of readers in his own country, but after the publication of his "Origin of the Species" in 1859, it may be said that he interested and excited the curiosity of thoughtful readers the world over, and aroused the enthusiasm or provoked the criticism of scientists everywhere.

In this country the book made a profound impression. Heralded by the savage reviews in the magazines and by the criticisms or encomiums of our own learned men, the book found eager and expectant readers among the young and old. It had more readers among the young, probably, than any book of its character published up to that time, and the immediate beneficial effect was to widen the circle of readers of scientific works and to ingraft in the minds of the young men and the young women of that day a taste for science.

The reasoning of so profound a thinker had a direct effect not easily characterized or described. The minds of the young were tintured with Darwinism, but in this country the book came to the people in an era marked by activity and resistance. Neither men nor women were passive, and neither as receptive as in quieter periods. Hence, while few people were carried away by Darwin's theories, nearly all yielded somewhat to his influence, and all became greatly interested in the wonderful array of facts submitted in support of his reasoning.

Without touching at all upon the tenets of Darwinism, we may trace the influence of Darwin in this country by signs and marks that no one will contend are misleading. Whether he pleased, or surprised, or shocked, he set men to thinking and talking. The majority may have thought and talked to little purpose, but like the denunciations from the pulpit, or the cartoons and lampoons in the papers, or the criticisms and discussions in the leading magazines, all contributed to familiarize the public with the writings and theories of scientific men generally.

Darwin was not the fancy of a moment. He held the public ear continuously, and the public eye for that matter, for the caricaturists and cartoonists have never ceased firing at Darwinism since the day the "Origin of the Species" was published. The prejudices formed when the discussion was in its infancy yielded gradually, until in their stead were convictions as extreme, possibly, so far as hostility was concerned, as the prejudices had been, but exercising a different influence in shaping the second sober thought in the aggregate. When the "Descent of Man" was published, in 1871, the people were in a mood to read it eagerly and weigh it carefully. Those who remember the reviews of "The Origin of the Species" which appeared in the American periodicals of 1859 and 1860, and those of "The Descent of Man," which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Monthly, and other

periodicals of 1871 and 1872, will have less difficulty than others in measuring the change in standard public opinion.

The objections to Darwinism were as strongly put, but the treatment of the scientist was different. The "Descent of Man" did not startle or even surprise the average reader. It created a sensation because it met public expectation, and because, independent of Darwin's pet theories, it contained so much of value. Even men who could scarcely tolerate Darwin's opinions, and who never thought of accepting his conclusions, read not only this book, but all of his books that were accessible, with the keenest interest, and, it may be said, with benefit. Through him the many who read from motives of curiosity formed at least a long range acquaintance with contemporary thinkers, and were led in many cases to closely examine works that otherwise would have received no attention.

Darwin's influence, then, must be considered apart from the influence of Darwinism. The men he convinced, or converted, are to be counted with those whose views he modified or whose mental powers he quickened. He made his first successful venture as an author in 1839, when he was 30 years old. His treatise on "Coral Reef" was published in 1842, his work on "Volcanic Islands" in 1844, "Geological Observations" in 1846, his "Monograph on Cirripedia" in 1851, "Origin of the Species by Natural Selection" in 1859, "Fertilization of Orchids" in 1861, "Habits and Movements of Climbing Plants" in 1865, "Domesticated Animals and Cultivated Plants" in 1867, "Descent of Man" in 1871, "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals" in 1872, "Fertilization in the Vegetable Kingdom" and "Forms of Flowers" between the last date and 1880, "Power of Movements in Plants" in 1881, and "Earthworms" in 1882.

Some of these were of a character to interest only the scientific, but nearly all of those published since the "Origin of the Species," while of special interest to the learned, have made a strong appeal to unscientific readers. For example, the treatise on the "Habits and Movements of the Climbing Plants" had a sort of fascination for many practical and prosaic old farmers, who read nothing else of that character. At the same time, it caught the fancy of many romantic school girls, who found in it something of the wonderland atmosphere. The work on "Domesticated Animals and Cultivated Plants" became a standard in agricultural libraries, and boys had a way of reading the curious things and skipping the abstruse. And the work on the "Expression of Emotions" was curious enough to be entertaining to people who caught only a glimmering of the author's purpose.

So it has happened that Darwin for twenty years has been talking to a largely increasing audience, who cared little for Darwinism, and who were little influenced by ridicule or hostile criticism. Careless observers will not be ready to admit the permeating quality of Darwin's individuality until they go over the best of our modern novels with this point in mind.

There is often a reminder of the rugged old geological botanist and zoologist, in connection with an outburst of sentiment, which shows that a recollection of something Darwin had said suggested the delicate tracery woven into a telling climax. This permeation will continue with a juster appreciation of the character and work of the man who, at the age of 73, died on Wednesday. For those who read him carefully the appreciation came with the reading.