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THE DEATH OF CHARLES DARWIN.

ONCE more the sickle of Death has been busy among our great men, and this time it has lopped down a SAUL among the people. With startling surprise have we learned that CHARLES DARWIN, whose name is a household word, is dead. He died on Wednesday, at Down House, in the county of Kent, in the 74th year of his age, regretted, we may add, by all the civilised world. Whatever diversity of opinion there may be as to the scientific doctrines enunciated by Mr DARWIN, there is no intelligent or educated Englishman or Welshman who is likely to dispute his claim to be ranked as one of the most wonderful men of the age, a man of true creative genius, patient and unwearied in research, and of more originality, perhaps, than any genius of our time. Among those who have never read his books or attempted to understand his teaching, he may have appeared to be an eccentric sort of thinker who fancied that we had all descended from monkeys. But the place which DARWIN holds among the men of science of his day must be determined, not by those who have never listened patiently to his story, but by those who have taken his books into the quiet chamber and studied them devoutly.

There were several remarkable gifts which this great man possessed in an extraordinary measure. His power of reading nature as if it were a mere book lying open before him was one of them. He was not, so to speak, an excavator; he seemed to sit before the open page of creation, and read it off at sight not spelling out a word at a time, but reading straight off what had been written on the pages by the hand of the CREATOR. We may say this without committing ourselves to all his doctrines, some of which have yet to be tried as by fire, waiting further evidence to make it clear in what they are still deficient, and how far they may be implicitly received. But one of the most delightful of his gifts—rarer almost than the rarest—was the charm which he imparted to every subject which he handled. In the hands of an inferior writer, the profound questions which he discussed would have dropped like lead among the people. But DARWIN could make it pleasant to follow him through the most abstruse reasoning. His descriptive power was a kind of genius. He made natural history interesting to the multitude without the aid of woodcuts or coloured prints, though these were by no means wanting in his works. Then he could see what no one else had ever observed until he called attention to it.

Even improbability itself seemed in his hand to acquire the force of certainty. The magic power of his pen appears nowhere, we think, more strikingly than in his "Voyage of a Naturalist." That book is one of the most fascinating and yet one of the most instructive in the English tongue. The reader feels compelled to go from page to page as if he were himself

in the Beagle oil the trackless sea, visiting strange lands, and looking upon new scenes and fantastic sights. That work alone bespeaks an author of remarkable gifts.

The name, DARWIN, has long been known in this country in connection with uncommon gifts. ERASMUS DARWIN, the grandfather of the great naturalist whose decease we this day deplore, was, in some respects, a singular man. He died two years after the of the present century. Singularly, too, in trying to be a poet, he rather proved that he was a naturalist. The very subjects of his verse might be regarded as an indication of the revelations which his yet unborn grandson were to unfold. The "Loves of the Plants," for example, may be regarded as the foreshadows of what we have been asked to listen to within recent years. In fact, long before the grandson was born, the grandfather had put the question,

"Would it be too bold to imagine "that, in the great length of time since the earth began to exist, perhaps millions of ages before the commencement of the history of mankind—would it be too bold to imagine that all warm-blooded animals have arisen from one living filament, which the great FIRST CAUSE endued with animality?"

What ERASMUS, the grand-sire, asked, CHARLES, the grandson, endeavoured to answer, with what success every student of his works must answer for himself. It is too soon to I form a correct estimate of the services rendered to biological science and to literature by CHARLES DARWIN, but it is impossible to say the last Farewell without acknowledging that we have lost one of the most powerful intellects and most original thinkers of this or any other age.