BISHOP WILBERFORCE'S ESSAYS. 

It is well known that Bishop Wilberforce's reputation will gain more than it loses by his republication of his articles contributed to the Quarterly Review in 1830. He has, in fact, considered, to give no slight praise both to the writer and to the paper. It is not only one who can afford the reproduction of his opinions some years ago. To many of us, such a republication would be a pleasure; of the ghosts of false prophecies and unrealised fears—ghosts we should be only too glad to exercise with all convenient speed. To us mean to say that, so far as many of the Bishop's essays are concerned, the result is very distinct.

The Bishop has been the subject of much discussion on the subject of his character and style. Apart, however, from all questions of talent or critical success on particular points, the two volumes of the Bishop's essays, so far as we can see, add to the Bishop's reputation, if only as bringing out a work which was undoubtedly his most striking characteristic—the versatility and originality of his mind. The busy Bishop, with all the duties of a politician, a distinguished orator, and a man of parts, is shown here almost the same variety of literary as of social activity. He is equally master of his means whether discussing pleasantly the history, or marshalling the heavy artillery of geology, or analyzing with a criticism at once sympathetic and scientific the character of John Keble or the self-revelations of Dr. Newman.

It is not true, however, that this force and the same time the limitations of this general talent are nowhere so well shown as in the Bishop's essay on the "Origin of Species." On every point in which mere knowledge or dialectical skill are sufficient to command the Bishop succeeds; on every point in which the philosophic instinct and the scientific habit are demanded, he is so regular. His, in fact, is purely forensic; the power which deals triumphantly with the results of an unfamiliar subject, the principles of which it can grasp neither grasp nor appreciate. Thus, while he is more pleasing to the point of view of Mr. Darwin with all those geological objections to his theory which great naturalist himself has so fully and frankly admitted, he appears as would be a consummate advocate with an instinctive eye for the "points" of his case, an admirable lucidity in stating forth, and a thorough mastery of a brief carefully prepared for an able speaker. When from details he passes to principle, from destructive criticism to constructive speculation, by this very means the advocate would fail who, after having triumphantly examined a scientific expert, should proceed to enunciate a rival view of his own. Bishop Wilberforce, in short, could see by the native of his intelligence all the weak points in the collateral evidence of the Bishop's opponents, but was evidently—in part, to doubt, from logical periphrases, but in part also from natural defects—incapable appearing the true impost and insignificance of such a hypothesis, or, indeed, of fully apprehending even its nature and object. This lucidly and convincingly shown in his mode of opposing his own and many of the "facts" of nature to Mr. Darwin's. Mr. Darwin,

two voices; the part of Filina being written for a high soprano, that of Mignon for a deep contralto. Filina could not possibly be other than she is as regards vocal characteristics; but, after hearing Miss E. Nilson and Miss Albinoni as Mignon, no one—and least of all Miss Ambrose Thomas himself—would say that there was any essential reason why the leading female role should be given to a soprano. The opera, in the opera version, gets married, should have a contralto voice. It seems to us that

One thing is quite certain—that Miss Albinoni's Mignon is at once a most truthful and a most charming impersonation. Mignon herself is more than a real child; her first moment becomes radiant in her last, in which her sensitive nature seems to have received its full emotional development. Miss Albinoni now melancholy, now playful and fantastic, and finally impassioned—was all that could have been desired by the poet, the painter, or the musician, who have successively presented the fascinating personage of Mignon. Miss Albinoni's performance was greeted enthusiastically; the pretty "Styrienne" being called for twice over.

The music must now suffice for noting the fact that Mr. Faure's performance as Mario was most masterly, and formed an important feature in the performance; and that Signor Nicolini sang all Ogliastro's music with great taste.

MIGNON.

Opinions differ as to who is the greatest composer of the day; the most fortunate would certainly seem to be M. Ambrose Thomas. Yet he has been a long time discovering his true vein; and if his "Hans" and his "Mignon" have enjoyed unusual advantages such as are only given to works of genius, the former work, for which he has received the highest praise, and on which he has worked so laboriously, is not a proof that his powers are of any pretension to greatness.

"MIGNON."
after quoting Milne Edwards's saying, that "Nature is prodigal in variety but niggard in innovation," proceeds to argue from this pragmatic truth —is the position—to his own hypothesis. "Way on the theory of creation," he says, "should we not be careful to see that the whole pans and organs of many independent beings, each supposed to have been separately created for its proper place in nature, be so commonly likeness to one another, that the whole of the spiritual and intellectual faculties of man, the soul of man, and the soul of the whole earth, should be alike?" The same distinction, he adds, "is of the same sort as that which has been taken from structure to structure." And he goes on to enlarge upon the "wonderful fact" that "all animals and plants throughout all time and space should be related to one another in a regular succession. He quotes the greater part of the first page of his essay upon the "order of nature," the species most closely related together, species of the same genus less closely and unally related, together, species of different genera related in different degrees forming suborders, families, orders, sub-classes, and classes." This being the fact to be accounted for, the evolution hypothesis is offered to account for it. And account for it it certainly does, with all the completeness with which community of origin will always account for relation. Whether subsequently observed facts confirm it, or contradict it, or simply fail to support it, is another matter altogether; and the Bishop had already shown with a force, which, great as it is, does not exceed the casual notice of the writer in his "Apologies," the notable failure of the geologic record in many respects, and of zoologic observation altogether, to support the hypothesis propounded. But the Bishop is now upon the question of its d privity merits as a hypothesis; he has to give an alternative explanation for the facts. And it is this.

After quoting Mr. Darwin's statement above given of the phenomena to be explained, he continues: "How can we account for all this? Is it by the simplest and yet the most comprehensive answer. By declaring the stupendous fact that all creation is the transcript in matter of ideas eternally existing in the mind of the Most High—that order in the utmost perfection of its relation pervades His works because it is above its centre and highest fountain head as in Him the Lord of all." "Allowance, as we have said, must be made here for the natural theological bias of the writer's mind; but still Bishop Wilberforce was something more than a mere theologian, and one might have expected so acute a mind as his to perceive that the "simple and comprehensive answer" here given is in truth no answer at all. In the first place it is, considered as a hypothesis, in no sense a rival hypothesis to Mr. Darwin's. It relates to an antecedent stage in the preparation of the phenomena to be explained; and even accepting it as a hypothesis, utterly incapable of verification as it is, it does not necessarily exclude, but, on the contrary, is perfectly reconcilable with Mr. Darwin's theory of the matter. It is quite conceivable that existing forms of life may be "transcripts in matter of ideas eternally existing" in a Divine mind, and yet that the same Divine mind has willed that the process of "transcription" should take place by the operation of the law of evolution. A divine predetermination of certain events may be possible without excluding the possibility of their having been achieved by a given natural process. In the next place, the Bishop's hypothesis is open to the fatal objection that it does not account for the facts—amongst which occasional imperfection has to be accounted for as well as general perfection. The Bishop, indeed, just glances at this objection; but it seems to excite his indignation too much to allow him to meet it by argument, and his method becomes wholly unreasoning. A passage in which Mr. Darwin, after pointing out some of the imperfections in nature ("the stinging of the bee causing the bee's own death;" the production of drones "in such vast numbers as for one single act, with the great majority slaughtered by their sterile mates," etc.), adds that there is upon his hypothesis nothing marvellous in these failures of power, and that the wonder, indeed, is, on the theory of natural selection, that more cases of absolute perfection have not been observed. Upon this passage the Bishop's only comment is that "the real temper of this whole speculation as to nature itself may be read in the closing lines. It is a disconquering view of nature. The question, however, is not whether it is disconquering, but whether it is true. If it be true that there are marks of waste, of failure, of ill-adaptation of means to ends of imperfection, in a word, in nature—then the Bishop's hypothesis above quoted so far fails to account for the phenomena, and Mr. Darwin's so far succeeds. The Bishop, indeed, declares a little farther on that he can give a "simpler solution still for the presence of these strange forms of imperfection and suffering." But the only attempt at this solution which he makes is the passage to "the strong shudder which ran through all the world when its head and ruler fell;" and if this really means, as it seems to mean, that these phenomena are to be accounted for by the Fall of Man, the scientific field of controversy is here so completely abandoned that it would be useless to follow the discussion further.

We have devoted thus much space to the essay on the Origin of Species, for it is at once the most interesting in the volumes, and best illustrates by way of contrast the peculiar powers and the limitations of the writer's mind. In the more strictly defined field of theological polemics we find, as we should have expected, more evidence of the Bishop's personal essay than evidence of their limitation. In his article on "Essays and Reviews" the Bishop is able to carry the war into the enemy's country and keep it there through, and the vigour and acuteness with which he maintains the battle make us forget the real weakness of his own position—one, we may add, which his party have had subordinately to abandon, and in the surrender of which the Bishop himself had doubtless learned long before his death to acquiesce. After the Bishop had done his worst upon his adversaries, it yet remains the fact that there is no logical resting-place between maintaining the plain and verbal inspiration of Scripture (the Bishop of course, would have repudiated), and conceding that full supremacy of reason in interpreting it which he inconsistently denied to his then opponents. Dr.
salmon fisheries of the sea is only once alluded to, and that with a parade, as if their interests were carefully watched, when it is only too evident that the poor man's right to benefit by the valuable salmon fishery around the Irish coast is being silently but surely encroached upon by the re-fraction of fixed engines, &c., suggestive of trouble and disaster to the salmon fishery. Speaking, however, of a child, who was but a child when she died (or, in the operatic version, gets married), should have a contrary effect. And the gentle sympathy Mignon expresses in the opera, in support of the character represented by her, is in many cases more than the thing, and in moments of supreme emotion, might have attained those higher altitudes so much better suited to her than the whole tone of the piece.

One thing is quite certain—that Mdlle. Albani's Mignon is at once a most truthful and a most charming impersonation. Mignon herself is a vision more than a reality, and the Mignon presented to us by Mdlle. Albani is Mignon in a thousand ways. And the Mdlle. Albani as Mignon, no one—and least of all M. Ambroise Thomas himself—would say that there was any essential reason why the operatic child, who was but a child when she died (or, in the operatic version, gets married), should have a contrary effect. And the gentle sympathy Mignon expresses in the opera, in support of the character represented by her, is in many cases more than the thing, and in moments of supreme emotion, might have attained those higher altitudes so much better suited to her than the whole tone of the piece.

Next to being supplied with an excellent basis for musical composition, the best thing that can happen to the maestro is to have his music when composed admirably executed, and it is a great credit to M. Pauvert, for the work of executing it, and to M. Charles, for the vocal part. The music is finely composed, and the voices are admirably tuned. The orchestration is also finely done, and the whole work is admirably executed. The ensemble is very fine, and the voices are admirably tuned. The orchestra is very well conducted. The piece is a masterpiece. It is a work of great merit, and the singers are admirably tuned.
after quoting Mr. Edward's saying, that "Nature is prolific in variety but not profuse in invention." This is the real key of his position—to his own hypothesis. "Why on the theory of creation," he asks, "should this be so? Why should all the parts and organs of many independent beings, each supposed to have been independently created, for its proper preservation, be so closely linked together by graduated steps? Why not that Nature have taken a leap from structure to structure?" And he goes on to enlarge upon the "transitional forms" and plants throughout all time and space should be related to each other in a manner to indicate to a greater degree the manner in which we everywhere behold—namely, varieties of the same species most closely related together, species of the same genus less closely allied, and genera related, and genera related in different degrees forming sub-families, families, orders, sub-classes, and classes." This being the fact to be accounted for, the evolution hypothesis is offered to account for it. And account for it it certainly does; and at least through the whole of common sense, it always account for relations of similarity. Whether subsequently observed facts confirm it, or contradict it, or simply fail to support it, is another matter altogether; and the Bishop had already shown with a force which, great as it was, was not entirely in keeping with his own account of the notorious failure of the geological record in many respects, and of zoological observation altogether, to support the hypothesis proposed. But the Bishop, in order to support his merits as a historian, does not hesitate to suggest an alternative explanation for the facts. And it is this. After quoting Mr. Darwin's statement above given of the phenomena to be explained, he continues: "How can we account for all this?" Indeed, he goes on to comprehensively extend and restate. By declaring the stupendous fact that all creation is the transcript in matter of ideas eternally existing in the mind of the Most High—that order in the utmost perfectness of its relation pervades His works because it is a transcript in His mind; and, one might have expected so acute a mind as his to perceive that the best answer here is simply "let him answer in his own words in the plain truth no answer at all. In the first place it is considered, as a "hypothesis," in no sense a rival hypothesis to Mr. Darwin's. It relates to the subjects of the preparation of the phenomena to be explained; and even accepting it for the moment, utterly incorrect by the Bishop, in the mere fact of its having been achieved by a given natural process. In the next place, the Bishop's hypothesis is open to the fatal objection that it obscures, or makes fact—amongst which occasional imperfection has to be accounted for as well as perfection. The Bishop, indeed, just glances at this objection; but it seems to excite his indignation too much to allow him to meet it by argument, and his method then becomes one of evasion. He quotes to support his position, after pointing out some of the imperfections in nature ("the bee causing the bee's own death;" the production of drones "in such vast numbers for one single act, with the great majority slaughtered by the queen bee herself, and that at a time when it is most necessary to the fact of 'ichneumonidæ feeding within the live bodies of caterpillars,' etc.), adds and that the "wonder, indeed, is, on the theory of natural selection, that any such perfection has been observed."

Upon this passage the Bishop's only comment is that "the real temper of this whole speculation as to nature itself may be read in the note." It is a disheartening view of nature. The question, however, is not whether it is dishonouring, but whether it is dishonouring to say that there are marks of waste, of failure, of ill-adaptation of means to ends—of imperfection, in a word, in nature—then the Bishop's hypothesis expressed so far quoted is to account for perfection. The Bishop, Mr. Darwin's so far succeeds. The Bishop, indeed, declares a little farther on, that he can give "a simpler solution still for the presence of these strange formations—of perfection and suffering." But the only attempt at this solution which he offers is of the next degree of absurdity, that "the strong shudder which ran through all the world when its head and ruler fell;" and that this really means, as it seems to mean, that these phenomena are the result of God's anger because of the Fall of Man, the scientific field of controversy is here so completely abandoned that it would be useless to follow the discussion further.

We have devoted thus much space to the essay on the Origin of Species because it is one of the most interesting in the volume, and best illustrates by way of contrast the different powers and limitations of the writer's mind. In the more strictly defined field of theological polemics we find, as we should have expected, more evidence of the Bishop's conscientious earnestness and less evidence of his limitation. In his article on "Essays and Reviews" the Bishop is quite able to carry the point of the enemy's country and keep it there throughout, and the vigour and alertness with which he maintains the battle make us forget the real weakness of his argument. The poem, once more, had subsequently to abandon, and in the surrender of which the Bishop himself had doubtless learned long before his death to acquiesce. After the Bishop's death, a new hope upon his adversaries, it yet remains the fact that there is no logical point of contact between maintaining the plenary and verbal inspiration of Scripture (which the Bishop, of course, would have repudiated), and conceiving that full supremacy in reason in interpriets which he inconsistently denied to his then opponents. Dr. Willersforce could see the theological results of such a concession better than he could see its logical inconsequentia. "If the Bishop could have destroyed a small part of the very key of his position—to his own hypothesis. "Why on the theory of creation," he asks, "should this be so? Why should all the parts and organs of many independent beings, each supposed to have been independently created, for its proper preservation, be so closely linked together by graduated steps? Why not that Nature have taken a leap from structure to structure?" And he goes on to enlarge upon the "transitional forms" and plants throughout all time and space should be related to each other in a manner to indicate to a greater degree the manner in which we everywhere behold—namely, varieties of the same species most closely related together, species of the same genus less closely allied, and genera related, and genera related in different degrees forming sub-families, families, orders, sub-classes, and classes." This being the fact to be accounted for, the evolution hypothesis is offered to account for it. And account for it it certainly does; and at least through the whole of common sense, it always account for relations of similarity. Whether subsequently observed facts confirm it, or contradict it, or simply fail to support it, is another matter altogether; and the Bishop had already shown with a force which, great as it was, was not entirely in keeping with his own account of the notorious failure of the geological record in many respects, and of zoological observation altogether, to support the hypothesis proposed. But the Bishop, in order to support his merits as a historian, does not hesitate to suggest an alternative explanation for the facts. And it is this. After quoting Mr. Darwin's statement above given of the phenomena to be explained, he continues: "How can we account for all this?" Indeed, he goes on to comprehensively extend and restate. By declaring the stupendous fact that all creation is the transcript in matter of ideas eternally existing in the mind of the Most High—that order in the utmost perfectness of its relation pervades His works because it is a transcript in His mind; and, one might have expected so acute a mind as his to perceive that the best answer here is simply "let him answer in his own words in the plain truth no answer at all. In the first place it is considered, as a "hypothesis," in no sense a rival hypothesis to Mr. Darwin's. It relates to the subjects of the preparation of the phenomena to be explained; and even accepting it for the moment, utterly incorrect by the Bishop, in the mere fact of its having been achieved by a given natural process. In the next place, the Bishop's hypothesis is open to the fatal objection that it obscures, or makes fact—amongst which occasional imperfection has to be accounted for as well as perfection. The Bishop, indeed, just glances at this objection; but it seems to excite his indignation too much to allow him to meet it by argument, and his method then becomes one of evasion. He quotes to support his position, after pointing out some of the imperfections in nature ("the bee causing the bee's own death;" the production of drones "in such vast numbers for one single act, with the great majority slaughtered by the queen bee herself, and that at a time when it is most necessary to the fact of 'ichneumonidæ feeding within the live bodies of caterpillars,' etc.), adds and that the "wonder, indeed, is, on the theory of natural selection, that any such perfection has been observed."

Upon this passage the Bishop's only comment is that "the real temper of this whole speculation as to nature itself may be read in the note." It is a disheartening view of nature. The question, however, is not whether it is dishonouring, but whether it is dishonouring to say that there are marks of waste, of failure, of ill-adaptation of means to ends—of imperfection, in a word, in nature—then the Bishop's hypothesis expressed so far quoted is to account for perfection. The Bishop, indeed, declares a little farther on, that he can give "a simpler solution still for the presence of these strange formations—of perfection and suffering." But the only attempt at this solution which he offers is of the next degree of absurdity, that "the strong shudder which ran through all the world when its head and ruler fell;" and that this really means, as it seems to mean, that these phenomena are the result of God's anger because of the Fall of Man, the scientific field of controversy is here so completely abandoned that it would be useless to follow the discussion further.

We have devoted thus much space to the essay on the Origin of Species because it is one of the most interesting in the volume, and best illustrates by way of contrast the different powers and limitations of the writer's mind. In the more strictly defined field of theological polemics we find, as we should have expected, more evidence of the Bishop's conscientious earnestness and less evidence of his limitation. In his article on "Essays and Reviews" the Bishop is quite able to carry the point of the enemy's country and keep it there throughout, and the vigour and alertness with which he maintains the battle make us forget the real weakness of his argument. The poem, once more, had subsequently to abandon, and in the surrender of which the Bishop himself had doubtless learned long before his death to acquiesce. After the Bishop's death, a new hope upon his adversaries, it yet remains the fact that there is no logical point of contact between maintaining the plenary and verbal inspiration of Scripture (which the Bishop, of course, would have repudiated), and conceiving that full supremacy in reason in interpriets which he inconsistently denied to his then opponents. Dr. Willersforce could see the theological results of such a concession better than he could see its logical inconsequentia. "If the Bishop could have destroyed a small part of the