

SCIENCE

MR. DARWIN.

MR. W. F. AINSWORTH writes, regarding the papers read by Mr. Darwin before the Plinian Society, which we assigned to the author's sixteenth year:—

“I have the printed *Transactions* of the Plinian Society before me for 1826 and 1827, and I find that on the 27th of March, 1827, Mr. Darwin made a communication on the ova of the Flustra, in which he announced that he had discovered organs of motion; and secondly, that the small black body hitherto mistaken for the young *Fucus loricus* is in reality the ovum of *Pontodella muricata*. On the 3rd of April following Mr. Darwin exhibited specimens of the *Pontodella muricata* with ova and young. Thus, in his first contribution to natural history, Mr. Darwin foreshadowed the eminence of his future career, but as he was born on February 12th, 1809, he was in his eighteenth year.

“As a member of the Plinian Society at the same period, Mr. Darwin and myself made frequent excursions on the shores of the Firth of Forth in pursuit of objects of natural history, sometimes to the coast of Fifeshire, and sometimes to the islands. On one occasion we went, accompanied by Dr. Greville, the botanist, to the Isle of May, and we were both exceedingly amused at the effect produced upon the eminent cryptogamist by the screeching of the kittiwakes and other waterfowl. He had actually to lie down on the greensward to enjoy his prolonged cachinnation. Another time we were benighted on Inch Keith, but found refuge in the lighthouse.

“Mr. Darwin also carried on his researches with Dr., afterwards Prof., Grant, and it was the same year (1827), I believe, the doctor first found silica in sponges, and now we have lived to see the Regadera of the Philippines—one exquisitely beautiful structure of silica.”

Dr. W. B. Carpenter writes:—

“Permit me to correct a mistake made by the writer of your otherwise excellent biographical notice of Darwin, as to the date of the first

