

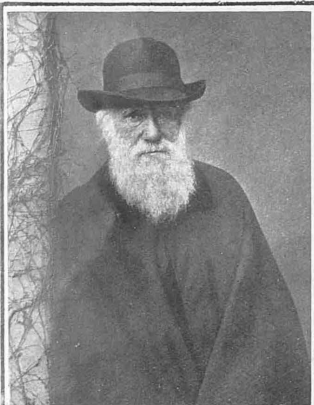
1809—THE CENTENARY OF CHARLES DARWIN—1882.



Darwin's House at Down, Kent
Where he lived from 1842 till his death in 1882



Charles Darwin in 1849
As drawn by T. H. Maguire



Darwin Before the Camera
Taken by Elliott and Fry



Marking Darwin's London House, 1839-42
At 110, Gower Street

The Life and Work of the Great Biologist

Described by EDWARD CLODD

Advancing years need their consolations, and among these is the material for comparison between the past and present attitude of thinkers and workers towards great movements, notabest among which must be counted what is known as Darwinism. A generation has passed since the memorable evening at the Royal Institution in November, 1880, when Huxley delivered a lecture, "On the Coming of Age of *The Origin of Species*," and those still among us who were privileged to hear that discourse will remember with what emphasis at its close he applied to the changed fortunes of the theory of natural selection the appropriate and ancient words, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."

His Own Origins

To dwell upon the reception, hostile alike from some men of science as well as theologians, accorded to *The Origin of Species* is but to repeat a profitless incident in the barren history of controversy; time and space are better spent in reviewing what changes that book has effected in man's conceptions of himself and in his outlook on the universe. Its author, the centenary of whose birth falls to-day (Friday), was born at Shrewsbury in 1809. His grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, was a physician and a poet whose "Loves of the Plants" was amusingly parodied in "The Loves of the Triangles" in *The Anti-Jacobin*, and whose *Zoonomia* was a prose treatise embodying speculations on changes in living things, the key to which was to be discovered by his famous grandson. The father was also a doctor, the mother was a daughter of Wedgwood, the famous potter, so in both parents there was the potential stuff for making a man of mark.

His Work on the "Beagle"

Neither school nor university did much for Darwin; he told his distinguished cousin, Mr. Francis Galton, that all he had learned of any value had been due to self-tuition; and so aimless seemed his early manhood that his father, whose profession he declined to follow, pressed him to qualify for the cure of souls. But this without effect; he had love of Nature and zest to interrogate her in his blood, and while he was thought of by his nearest and dearest as one achieving little for himself at Cambridge he was there qualifying for what was to be the crowning work of his life. Anyway, the repute he gained among men competent to judge procured for him when he was only twenty-two the post of naturalist on board the *Beagle*, commissioned on survey work in the southern hemisphere. In that ship he sailed round the world, collecting in the various countries where he landed a mass of material representative of both past and present life forms, whose relations, witnessing to some processes of development yet obscure, gave impetus to research and experiments through long years. That the myriads of plants and animals spread over the surface of the globe had been separately created was a doctrine unquestioned for centuries until one doubter after another, seeing that the resemblances between these organisms were far more obvious than the differences, was set on the quest of discovery of causes of identities that appeared to be fundamental.

"The Origin of Species"

In that quest Darwin took a leading part, and, as all the world has been told, ran his quarry to earth in a book by Parson Malthus, who in an *Essay on Population* had shown that as the number of mouths to be filled exceeds the food supply for them, the weaker must go to the wall, conquered by those better equipped for the inevitable life struggle, these victors transmitting the qualities whereby they won to their offspring. They are what are called "naturally selected," hence the name of the theory associated with Darwin's name, although it must never be forgotten that the theory formulated in almost identical terms was hit upon independently by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace when he was in the Malay Archipelago in 1858; he, too, inspired to like result by reading Malthus. But that is a chapter of the story which will be more fitly told on the occasion of the jubilee celebration of the publication of *The Origin of Species* in November next.

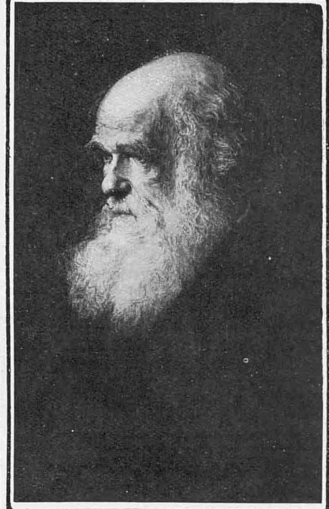
After his marriage and brief sojourn in London Darwin, blessed with means and leisure for prosecution of his work, settled in the village of Down in Kent, where he remained until his death on April 27, 1882. He was laid at rest in that "abbey grey" whose illustrious departed, in the fine words of Addison, are "all contemporaries together."

The Projection of his Theories

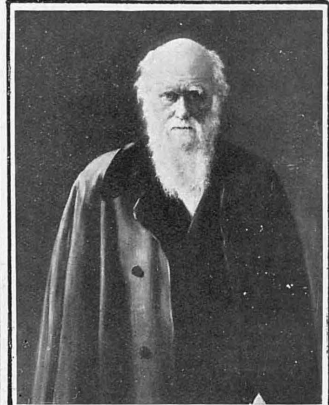
It must be borne in mind that the Darwinian theory deals only with the origin of plants and animals from common ancestry. It is not concerned with the origin of life itself; nor with those conditions preceding life which are covered by what is known as inorganic evolution, i.e., the evolution of the solar and other stellar systems as masses of lifeless (wholly a relative term) material. Therefore it makes appeal which no theories of the cosmos, however awe-inspiring and wonder-filling these may be, can arouse in human hearts, for Darwin's explanation of the evolution of the highest life forms from simple structures stops not at their bodies and functions; it is extended to their mental apparatus and faculties. As comparisons between the nervous systems of man and his nearest allies make clear, mind has been evolved no less than matter. Mind runs through the universe; informs and permeates its every part; and the history of man's progress is the history of the triumph of mind over matter, albeit these terms do but cover our ignorance of the nature of both. Touching man as a thinking and emotional being on every side, giving the key to the social, political, ethical, and religious institutions in which are embodied the efforts and triumphs of our race, the far-reaching significance of the work of Darwin, and of those who carry it on in his self-effacing, truth-loving spirit, becomes more manifest as time rolls on.



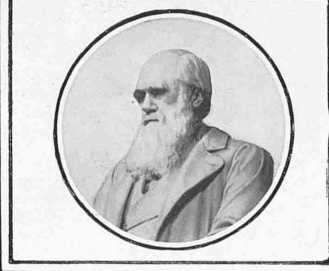
Darwin's House at Down, Kent
The window in the gable is that of his study



Charles Darwin in 1875
As painted by W. Oules, R.A.



Charles Darwin in 1881
As painted by the Hon. John Collier



Head of the Darwin Statue

By E. J. Boehm, R.A., for the Natural History Museum