

the intellectual world in the last century. What was the result of their deliberations? Surely they must have come to some decision pregnant with a few elements of superstition. If the Cabinet Council bore this fruit, why were not the best scholars of the country stayed in some degree by an intense fear in that effect? If no new determination is required to Irish affairs was arrived at—and we hear from Mr. GALLAGHER'S absence from the House last night and the studied request of Mr. FROSTER'S reply that this is the case—then, indeed, it must be admitted that the dangers we have to face must be exceptionally serious.

Yesterday saw the quiet ending of Mr. Darwin's life. He passed that life in elaborating one central idea, and he remained in the world long enough to see the whole course of modern science altered by his speculations. The extreme conclusions furnished with modesty by him and with aggressive confidence by his disciples are hardly to be universally accepted; but his most ardent opponents allow that he has never been credited as an observer, and that his discoveries gave an impulse to biological research similar to the impulse given to mathematics by the discovery of calculus. The same controversies which once made his name a kind of by-word have died away. The opposing parties are now entirely agreed, but even those who cannot believe that Darwin propounded an absolute truth are willing to grant that his theory is a good working hypothesis for naturalists. It is now twenty-three years since "The Origin of Species" was published. No other book ever earned a more profuse attention, and probably no book was ever received with such extensive manifestations of scientific enthusiasm and scientific incredulity. The central idea of which we have spoken had been as it were "in the air" for more than a century. An obscure treatise written by DUMARCY contained a most forcible and suggestive sketch of the whole theory; but DUMARCY supplied details, whereas DARWIN gave an exhaustive series of observations. LACAZE and several other French observers had followed on the lines sketched out by DUMARCY, while Mr. WALLACE actually formulated a theory of Natural Selection which is identical with Darwin's. But the brilliant speculations were eclipsed by the patient observer, and Mr. Darwin will always be considered as the first biologist of his day. With characteristic generosity Mr. WALLACE has declared that only one man in England was capable of writing "The Origin of Species." The history of the book is very curious. Mr. Darwin was visiting off the coast of South America in the Beagle. The study of certain fossils led him to compare living forms with the forms of the creatures whose remains were found in the rocks. Then his great idea took possession of his mind, and he at once saw that the work of his life was fixed. For twenty years he did not permit himself to trace any definite speculation; he spent the whole time in collecting facts. Then he placed the results of his research before the Cambridge Lectures, and LILLI told him that WALLACE was on the same track. As a consequence of this information "The Origin of Species" was speedily published, and the author at once became famous.

Considering the strong words that have been used about the great struggle, it is strange to see how obvious and simple are most of the conclusions advanced in the paper. As Professor FITZES has pointed out in his profound "Catholic Philosophy," the whole book resolves itself into certain simple propositions, most of which are demonstrated

DARWIN'S manner in the House of Commons, it would appear that the process of the Metropolitan Board of Works in selecting propositions of all kinds against fire in theatres are well within qualifications to judge. Rather to that expression of the seriousness of their execution on which we remarked some months ago that to any useful manufacturing measure on the subject may be attributed the continued existence in London of what the members of Embank described in death-traps. The terrible catastrophe at the King Theatre in Vienna gave a temporary impetus to public reflection in this country regarding these too familiar dangers, and did the excitement and apprehensions subside without producing good effects in the many improvements and means of prevention voluntarily made in our best and largest theatres. The Board of Works supplemented a kind of general recommendation for measures of safety based by the Local Government by appointing two deputy-inspectors, and by demanding a report of the condition of the various theatres to be made by the Fire Brigade Committee, an instruction carried out so liberally that its results are not available at the end of three months. Highly commendatory criticism is, however, given by the House of Commons that, whenever the inspection shall be completed, the Board of Works will meet with an objection from himself or the Local Government is every-where met any demands for alterations they may deem advisable. Full power and responsibility pass with the Board under the Act of 1878 of calling upon the owners of theatres to alter any construction that is considered to be a source of danger to the public from fire, provided that the expense of making this change be moderate. The greater the risk the greater the difficulty is affecting the change, because, as Mr. DUNN-CREWELL contended, the greater would be the expense; but this objection was met with doubtful efficacy by the House of Commons by alleging that any expenditure should be considered moderate which was found necessary to render a theatre safe. The heavy daily loss which under the Act can be imposed on the owner of a theatre should the alteration required not be completed within a specified period would certainly, save for the qualification as to the limit of expense, amount to an arbitrary, unjust, and possibly a useless restriction. It is open to doubt whether the most effectual means for avoiding comparative chances of danger from fire, should it occur, are yet ascertained; but unquestionably structural improvements—based on science with systematic and any number of supplementary means of exit—must be regarded as amongst the best, provided the last are always in a condition to be available, and not, as is too frequently the case, barred, or even furnished with lock and key. While such thought and care have already been devoted to this most important subject, it is unfortunately but too true that even in the best arranged theatres little has been done on behalf of the actor. Yet those behind the scenes are usually when a fire occurs in even greater peril than the audience. The magnificent and realistic effects in modern stage scenery depend so much on the use of artificial light in all its varied forms, and these employed because by the force of habit are indifferent, if not careless, that most people would be startled if permitted to peep behind the scenes. In those days, when the histrionic art is gaining higher and higher ground, when our standards are rising in all directions, and the old and increasing structures, too much strewn and scarcely laid on the necessity of providing every conceivable means of safety against the awful calamity of

the Irish people, and I think, properly interpreted, fully justified. To have done anything else would have signified a backwardness to those as a whole for the Irish such as even the most part of the world would not have wished. It might be supposed under these circumstances that the Government would admit the failure of the policy which detained the Irish Land Act and would not object for something better to take its place. Such a step is called for in the interests not merely of liberalism, but of law, order, and humanity. The collapse of the Irish Executive before the combined forces of violence, terrorism, and outrage is a disgrace to the civilized world. The country has called upon the Government to show themselves worthy of the position they occupy. All that is asked is that the terrible agonies which are now visiting every law of the land and man in Ireland should be put down by legal means and conventional authority. For this and extraordinary powers have been granted to the Executive, and these would be made even more plenary and effective if required. All the machinery for getting us back to the Irish political-agrarian world lies ready to the hand of the Government, if they only have law to use it with. They have an army of soldiers and constabulary in Ireland; they are able to move and cut the enemy into pieces on campaign and without trial; they are backed by the House of Commons by an absolute majority that would support any measure likely to purport the much-dreaded day of reckoning for the Liberal Party which is now visibly approaching. Great and terrible as is the struggle going on in Ireland, it is one which the present Government might and which some Government must win. This is a fact which a good many people do not seem thoroughly to understand. Law and order must be made to triumph in Ireland, whatever be the cost of the victory.

The Government profess to realize this; but how do their acts bear out their professions? It is as plain as the sun in the heavens that the Land Act will do more to incite the Irish people than the Coercion Act will to pacify them. Irish members and Irish newspapers declare this day after day, and that their words are less in danger of being the most significant of all testimony. The failure of the Government policy is now irrefragably written in letters of blood and fire. Ministers cannot shut their eyes to this damning fact, nor their ears to the increasingly impatient and angry demand of the country for a new policy which shall at least have the effect of saving life and protecting property. But how does what they see and hear affect their conduct? Apparently not at all. They wait for "more time," so that their measures may have the chance of phasing the predicted fault—as though grapes were ever yet known by thistles. They employ a thousand artifices to show that Ireland under Mr. Chamberlain is the terrible result of Ireland under Lord Salisbury. In the most open way they try to bribe the House of Commons with promises of concessions. When these devices fail, when the demand for something practical becomes insupportable, they make what for them is a great effort. One or two of their number visit the scene of strife, while the Chief Secretary is incessantly active in Dublin Castle. The Ministerial accounts are evidently in Ireland, and what does it all mean? Certain proposals for other minor changes in the previous methods of the Irish Executive, according to one rumour; but nothing whatever in the way of those Ministerial statements. There is something pitifully significant in the fact that, despite the Cabinet Council yesterday, Ministers afterwards had not a single encouraging word to say to the House on Irish affairs. They must have have discussed the Irish business of the miserable process, and have taken

decisions. We present these propositions in order: 1. These important points that survive. Before individual propositions are transmitted. These individuals whose particularities being made into close adaptation with their surroundings survive and transmit them to their offspring. The survival of the fittest thus leads to maintenance an equilibrium between organisms and their surroundings. The environment of every group of organisms is steadily changing. Every group of organisms constitutes a struggle against change character under penalty of extinction. A change set up is not part of an organism constitutes change in another part. These changes are completed by the law that structures are maintained in proportion to their use, and the changes thus set up meet after the character of any group of organisms. These are propositions which a child can understand, after they are granted. Darwin simply asks us to believe that since the appearance of life time enough has elapsed to produce all the varieties of species now seen. The volume closes with a beautiful and devoted exposition of belief in the divine wisdom that orders the life of the world. But, in spite of Darwin's simple faith, his views were twisted by certain men. By some and many of fortune the most accurate of thinkers was injured by such disciples who misunderstood him. The man who had done more than any other writer to show the lawless design that runs through creation was represented as believing in mere chance. This view teaching age passed away, but it still has prevailed Darwin much while it lasted.

When "The Origin of Species" had made its mark in Europe, the writer received his theory one step further. In the same day, evolution style he put forward his hypothesis concerning the descent of man from lower forms of life. The shock given by this audacious guess for it was but a guess) was never to be forgotten, and voices of indignation and controversy may still be heard. Darwin had not ventured to claim any novelty, but his German followers at once proceeded to speak as though our kindred with the ape was assumed. Those who read the original work and neglect to pay attention will find that the matter worked very easily, and said little or nothing that could have the most sensitive. He merely opened a discussion, and his preliminary discussion was attended with a full sense of the vast responsibility he had taken upon him. We may safely leave all these matters of controversy to be decided by time. The rest of the eminent naturalist's work has never been made a subject for quarrelling. He spent all his waking hours in constant observation of Nature. His work habits forced him to live in isolation, and he passed his quiet days in striving to learn the secrets of life. Every paragraph he published was recognized as a masterpiece. He wrote about the relations of plants and animals under domestication, the movements of plants, and the uses of insects in breeding flowers. His last book was a treatise on the action of water in modifying the surface of the earth by accumulating vegetable matter. This book shows the author at his best. His patience and industry make the whole volume a triumph of scientific demonstration, and we do not leave any work that is more well-calculated to give the most sceptical of men a sense of the stupor and wonder of creation. We cannot for a moment suppose all Darwin's conclusions are valid, but we are that he shows after truth, and that he deserves to be honored for his loyalty and conscientious devotion. He has created a new literature, and a new school of thought. If, as Lord Salisbury said, a great man is one who changes the spirit of his age, then Darwin was a great man, and we who cannot respect all his theories are indebted to his life.