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THE LATE CHARLES DARWIN.

THE announcement of Mr Darwin's death, which appears in our columns of this morning, will take, not English readers merely, but the entire civilised world, by surprise. The melancholy event took place at Mr Darwin's house, near the quiet little Kentish village of Down, near Beckenham, where for some years past the eminent naturalist has resided. The circumstances of his last illness present in themselves nothing specially remarkable. The deceased gentleman had been suffering for some time prior to his decease from a slight affection of the heart, which, however, did not seem calculated to cause his relatives any great anxiety. He continued his work and observations nearly to the last, but on Tuesday an attack of faintness and nausea supervened, the ailment lasting well-nigh throughout the day. Wednesday found Mr Darwin weaker, and towards the afternoon of that day, there appeared symptoms calculated to cause the gravest anxiety to his friends and relations. He remained conscious till well-nigh the last, death supervening at about four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. Surrounded by his wife and several of his children, one of the most eminent, not merely of naturalists, but of humankind, passed quietly to his rest, leaving behind a name and reputation which probably will rank in future ages as that of Aristotle or, Plato does to-day—a father of sciences, and an originator of conceptions which have tended even now, to mould into new channels the thoughts of the civilised world. During his illness, Mr Darwin was attended by Drs Andrew Clark, Moxon, and Moore, of London, and by Dr Alfrey, of St Mary Cray. Mr Darwin is survived by his wife—a cousin of his own. Married in 1831, Mr Darwin leaves a family of five sons and two daughters. Of these, at least one, Francis Darwin, M.B., is now well known in scientific circles as an ardent and successful follower in his father's footsteps. Mr Francis Darwin has most successfully assisted his father in many of the more recent botanical observations in which the deceased naturalist was engaged; and the study of "hereditary genius," so successfully undertaken by Mr Galton, finds naturally in the Darwin family a most typical instance of the transmission to posterity of the mental qualities for which more than one generation has been distinguished. Mr Darwin's last public appearance, it may be noted, took place at the Linnean Society on 16th March, when he read before that body two papers on special botanical topics. Of no man could it be more truly said that he died in harness than Charles Darwin; his last work, "On the Formation of Vegetable Mould by Earthworms," having been in the hands of the public for only a very few months at most, when the prolific pen has ceased its labours for ever.

Of Mr Darwin it may emphatically be said that his whole life was a long record of earnest and laborious scientific work. Born at Shrewsbury on February 12, 1809, his death found him in his seventy-fourth year. He was the son of Dr Robert Waring Darwin, F.R.S., of Shrewsbury, a physician in extensive practice. But the genealogy of the Darwins is matter of history, and unites in itself not merely a scientific, but a literary, connection of celebrated kind. Mr Darwin's grandfather was Erasmus Darwin, the famous scientist, botanist, and poet, whose "Garden," "Temple of Nature," "Zoonomia," and "Origin of Society" remain in our midst as permanent monuments of the literary and scientific genius of last century. Mr Darwin on his mother's side could also claim kindred with a historical and distinguished race. His mother was a daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, of English pottery fame, and his wife was a Miss Emma Wedgwood, a cousin of his own, as already remarked. If ever history repeated itself, the axiom may be said to have found ample illustration in the genesis of the Darwins. For the speculations of old Erasmus Darwin in his "Garden" on the loves dealt with the great question of species and their origin; both assumed that the species of animals and plants now existent, represent the more or less modified descendents of ancestors which in turn were descended from simpler and less modified forms; and both authors assumed that in the variations beheld in animals and plants as they exist around us to-day might be found the key to the great mystery of the "how" and "why" of living nature. If forms one of the strangest facts in connection with the history of Charles Darwin's life and work that the speculative philosophy which has since largely passed into the domain of proved fact, and with which his name will ever be associated, had an almost simultaneous origin in the mind of Mr Wallace, who, working in an opposite corner of the earth, thus arrived independently at similar conclusions to Mr Darwin himself. The year 1859 beheld the publication of the "Origin of Species"—a work now in its sixth edition and in its "thirteenth thousand," but which has been translated into almost every language wherein cultured mankind is given to express its thoughts. It is matter of history, and by no means uninteresting or uninstructive in retrospective nature, that the appearance of the "Origin of Species" was the signal for an outcry, chiefly emanating from the less cultured clergy, such as has rarely, if ever, been heard before or since. Darwin's name in 1859 was synonymous with every term whereby the English language could express the opposite of "orthodox" or "safe." As Professor Huxley remarked in a lecture "On the Coming of Age of the 'Origin of Species,'" delivered at the Royal Institution, 9th April, 1880, the book was published on the 1st October, 1859. Huxley had previously described in forcible and satirical terms how the "old ladies of both sexes" had denounced Darwin around their tea-tables. In the course of the lecture above alluded to, he remarked that "those who have watched the progress of science within the last ten years will bear me out to the full when I assert that there is no field of biological inquiry in which the influence of the 'Origin of Species' is not traceable; the foremost men of science in every country are either avowed champions of its leading doctrines, or at any rate abstain from opposing them; a host of young and ardent investigators seek for and find inspiration and guidance in Mr Darwin's great work; and the general doctrine of evolution, to one side of which it gives expression, obtains, in the phenomena of biology, a firm base of operations whence it may conduct its conquest of the whole realm of nature." Professor Huxley was well entitled to celebrate the majority of Mr Darwin's book; for it was he who acted as scientific godfather to the volume; and it was he who first championed Mr Darwin's views as a pure naturalist, and by his warm and skilful exposition and advocacy of them made the general public acquainted with their tenor and bearings on science at large. Geology had been working up to the Darwinian standpoint in biology when the "Origin of Species" appeared. The science of Lyell rejecting "catastrophes" and "cataclysms" in the field of geology, saw only the uniformity and slow progress of cosmical operations. The present as the key to the past was the motto of Lyell, and what that geologist did for his science Darwin undoubtedly accomplished for the science of life, by showing that the varied universe of living nature might be viewed simply as the result and outcome of the variation we see around us to-day. The opposition to Mr Darwin's views which was at first promulgated was largely the result of imperfect acquaintance with his views. Persons who had never read a page of the "Origin of Species," or indeed of a natural history text-book of any kind, were heard gravely to declare about 1858 or 1860 that Darwinism was simply an impossible theory, or that it was a wild dream which ran counter alike to scientific facts, and, what was infinitely more important, to revealed religion. But a better acquaintance with Mr Darwin's views has proved the most powerful corrective to all such crude criticism; whilst the hostile theologians have come to recognise that in Darwin's works they meet with a spirit of reverence excelled by that of no religious system, and with a recognition of creative power which fully exonerates the great naturalist from any charge of atheism which ignorance or the *odium theologicum* could prefer. The closing sentence of the "Origin of Species" itself, breathes a spirit of reverance in face of the mysteries of life which is eminently characteristic of the deceased naturalist. Speaking of the origin of living species, Darwin remarks, that there is something wondrous in the thought that the varied animals and plants of to-day have arisen from the modification of a few primitive forms, or of one primitive germ, into which the Creator breathed the breath of life. Within a comparatively few years after its publication the views of Mr Darwin were accepted by all competent naturalists. Those who could not and possessing, as perhaps his most distinctive trait, a high sense of conscientiousness in stating the weaknesses as well as the strength, the defects as well as the excellencies, of his speculations and observations. History can show no greater name in science than that of Charles Darwin. The future will be fortunate if it may produce a spirit with a tithe of his indnstry and originality. He lived to see his great work accepted as a guide to the future thoughts of men, and, so far, Darwin had the reward of his labours. As Professor Huxley said, in closing his lecture on the "Origin of Species," "We shall be prepared to congratulate the venerated author of the book, not only that the greatness of his achievement and its enduring influence upon the progress of knowledge have won him a place beside our Harvey; but still more that, like Harvey, he has lived long enough to outlast detraction and opposition, and to see the stone that the builders rejected become the head-stone of the corner." If there is one remark which might be made by way of supplement to this tribute, it is that Darwin's name and fame are likely to "blossom in the dust," wherever science is prosecuted, when the name even of Harvey himself may be known only to those who are concerned more immediately with the fruits of his great discovery.

GLASGOW CIRCUIT COURT.

A Circuit Court of Justiciary for the counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and Bute was held in Glasgow yesterday—Lords Young and Adam presiding. The number of cases to be disposed of was only 15, implicating 22 persons. Their Lordships, who had stayed overnight in the George Hotel, drove to the Justiciary Buildings about 11 o'clock, being accompanied by a number of civic dignitaries and officials, and escorted by a detachment of Dragoons and Highland Light Infantry. A large crowa of people had gathered at the gates and witnessed the arrival of the procession. Among these who accompanied their Lordships were Lord M'Laren Sheriff Clark, Bailies Dunlop, Wilson, Farquhar, Struthers Hamilton, M'Onie, Dron, Lord Dean of Guild Stephen, Deacon Convener Reid, Master of Works Laing, Rev. Mr Paton, St Paul's; Mr Nicol, City Chamberlain; and Mr Matthew Anderson, Clerk to the Court-House Commissioners. Mr A. Taylor Innes was Advocate-Depute, assisted in the Old Court by Mr George L. Macfarlane and in the New Court by Mr A. E. Henderson. Mr Æneas Macbean was clerk in the Old Court, and Mr J. M. M'Cosh in the New. The counsel were Messrs A. Ure, R. K. Galloway, L. J. Napier, P. J. Hamilton Grierson, S. B. Armour, Jas. G. Millar, Hay MacWatt, C. K. Mackenzie, Scott Moncrieff Penney, J. F. M'Lennan, and W. Cunningham Steele.

The Court was opened by the Rev. Mr Paton saying prayers.

OLD COURT.

(Before Lord YOUNG.)

THE LAW'S DELAY.

A middle-aged man named Thomas White was placed at the bar charged with theft and previous conviction. He carried on business as a watchmaker in High Street, Rothesay, and, being employed by various parties to repair and clean watches and clocks, he (1) on the 1st October last received a watch from a woodman named M'Fie in order that it might be repaired, and this he pledged in a pawn office in West Castle Street, Rothesay. In the second place, he was charged with pledging another watch in the month of December which he had also got to repair. Four previous convictions were recorded against the panel, who tendered a plea of guilty.

Lord YOUNG—Why was this case not tried at the last Circuit? The panel was committed for trial on 23d January, and the case is the simplest in the world—a confession. There was a Circuit Court held here on 21st February.

The ADVOCATE-DEPUTE—The reason for the delay, my Lord, is, I am informed, that there was some difficulty in procuring a previous Circuit Court conviction.

Lord YOUNG—Why? What difficulty could there be in that?

The ADVOCATE-DEPUTE—It is stated, my Lord, that the record was at that particular time away at the Circuit Court at Aberdeen.

Lord YOUNG—It could be got by return of post. (Addressing the panel)—You do seem, as your counsel has stated, to be in a very poor state of health, but you are a previously convicted thief, and have had sentences of long imprisonment. Upon the last occasion you were sentenced, apparently for just a similar offence as that you have pleaded guilty to, to 12 months' imprisonment. I cannot make your present sentence less than that, but I do not make it more. I sentence you to be again imprisoned for a period of 12 months.

The man was then removed.

A "TIFF" WITH A STEPFATHER.

A respectable-looking man, named John Fowler, otherwise John Muir, from the prison of Lanark, was charged with theft as also forgery. According to the libel he, on Monday, 23d January, stole a deposite receipt for £40 from a locked box in the house of Joan Watson (his stepfather), limeburner, Wilkshaw, Douglas Parish, to which he forged Watson's name, afterwards uplifting the money from the Royal Bank. The panel pleaded guilty, and on his behalf

Mr NAPIER made a few remarks. He stated that the accused had been for 10 years

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