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April, 1882.

DEATH OF MR. DARWIN.

The greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest men the world has produced, Charles Darwin, died at his home at the village of Downe, in Kent, on Wednesday, April the 19th, in the 74th year of his age. Mr. Darwin was a native of Shrewsbury, and there are some of our readers who remember Dr. Robert Darwin, a well-known Shrewsbury physician, the son of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, and the father of the most distinguished of Salopians.

Mr. Darwin had been suffering for some time from weakness of the heart, but had continued to do slight amount of experimental work up to the last. Even so late as Tuesday evening, at eight o'clock, he was in his study examining a plant he had instructed one of his servants to bring him. At half-past eight he was carried up to his room, where he read for a short time before going to bed. About midnight, however, he was attacked with pain in the chest, faintness, and nausea, and he remained in an extremely distressed condition of weakness until four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, when his death took place. In the meantime, Dr. Moxon had been sent for from town, but he only arrived a very short time before Mr. Darwin's death. The patient remained quite conscious until within quarter of an hour of his death, at which Mrs. Darwin and several of his children were present. At the moment of his death he was sitting, supported by his son, by the side of the bed.

Charles Robert Darwin was born at Shrewsbury on the 12th of February, 1809, and was, as we have said, the grandson on the paternal side of the well-known Erasmus Darwin, author of the "Botanic Garden." On the maternal side also he was descended from a man of considerable eminence, Josiah Wedgwood, the great potter, being his mother's father; and he married his cousin, Miss Wedgwood.

He was educated at Shrewsbury School, under Dr. Butler, and then went to Edinburgh, and subsequently to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1831. In the same year, Captain Fitzroy having offered to give up part of his own cabin to any naturalist who would accompany him on the voyage which his ship, the *Beagle*, was to make for scientific purposes, Mr. Darwin volunteered his services gratuitously, on condition that he should have the entire control of his collections, all of which he subsequently gave to various public institutions.

His "Voyage of the Beagle," - touching the chief points of a five years' cruise - is still one of the most delightful of his works, and shows vivid powers of description, as well as keen scientific shrewdness. His first great scientific work, "The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs," was published in 1842. After that a series of scientific works appeared, of which the greatest, of course, are those on "The Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man" books which have completely transformed the biological science of our day.

"The Origin of Species" was the book of the season. Every newspaper and magazine devoted long columns of reviews to it, while from platforms and pulpits, and University rostra, it was the subject either of the most unstinted adulation or of the most intemperate invective. The Continent was equally enthusiastic over it, and in the course of a short time the work was translated - sometimes more than once - into every civilized European language; while the Author's portrait appeared in all the illustrated journals, photographers' cases, and print shop windows. In brief, he awoke one day to find himself famous far beyond the comparatively circumscribed circle in which his

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reputation had hitherto been confined. Avowedly, "The Origin of Species" was only a sketch - a sort of preface to a larger and more elaborate series of works. Accordingly, in 1862 was published "The Various Contrivances by which Orchids are Fertilized," and, 1865, "The movements and Habits of Climbing Plants," both works of the highest botanical value, and only distantly relating to his theory.

In 1868, "The Variations of Plants and Animals under Domestication," and in 1871, "The Descent of Man" again aroused the violent controversy regarding the character of the Darwinian doctrines which was beginning to subside. "The Expression of the Emotions in Men and Animals" did not do much to allay this, though none could deny that the Author had enriched knowledge with a marvellous series of curious observations. In 1875, "Insectivorous Plants," describing the flesh-feeding characteristics of certain plants, *Drosera*, *Dionæa*, contained another excellent series of botanical observations.

"The Effects of Cross and Self Fertilisation" (1876) "The Different Forms of Flowers on Plants of the Same Species" (1877), and "The Movements of Plants (1880), at once proved Mr. Darwin not only to be an ingenious theorist, but the first physiological botanist of his age; and finally, in 1881, his now familiar treatise on the Earth Worm and its ways has only served to enhance his reputation.

The Standard says -The fundamental principle of Darwin's famous "Theory" is that all the varieties of plants and animals which we see in the world were not created, but were

"evolved" from a few, or even from one simple organism, by a system of natural selection, by means of which any species, instead of being immutable, is always liable to change, owing to some one of its individuals, being better fitted for adaptability to its surroundings, gaining a start of the others, and multiplying at their expense. Every plant and animal tends to increase in numbers in a geometrical progression, and every species transmits its general likeness, with individual differences, to its offspring. But, the Darwinian argues, any individual may present minute variations "of any kind and in any direction," and that "part being practically indefinite," these differences may in time assume the form of specific differences. This Theory - of which only the crudest outline, in the briefest space, has been given - was enunciated with a logical clearness, a mastery of the sciences necessary to its elucidation, and a wealth of curious little known facts, applied with a captivating literary power, moderation, and courtesy to all possible opponents, that fairly took the world by storm.

The newspapers are full of tributes to the singularly beautiful character of Mr. Darwin, and the patience with which he pursued his studies. The Times says he was so modest that up to the last he would send a letter for publication with more than the modesty of a tyro.

The Saturday Review says - "Happy in his fortune and happy in his marriage he also had the unusual happiness of finding among his own children the best and most zealous of co-adjutors. Under these conditions a sweet and gentle nature blossomed into perfection. Arrogance, irritability, and envy, the faults that ordinarily beset men of genius, were not so much conquered as non-existent in a singularly simple and generous mind. It never occurred to him that it would be to his gain to show that he and not some one else was the author of a discovery. If he was appealed to for help by a fellow-worker, the thought never passed into his mind that he had secrets to divulge which would lessen his importance. It was science, not the fame of science, that he loved, and he helped science by the temper in which he approached it. He had to say things which were distasteful to a large portion of the public; but he won the ear even of his most adverse critics by his manifest absence of a mere desire to shine, by his modesty, and by his courtesy. He told honestly what he thought to be the truth, but he told it without a wish to triumph or to wound. There is an arrogance of unorthodoxy as well as an arrogance of orthodoxy, and if ideas that a quarter of a century ago were regarded with dread are now accepted without a pang, the rapidity of the change of opinion, if not the change itself, is largely due to the fact that the leading exponent of these ideas was the least arrogant of men..... He set himself to work to study animal and vegetable life as it is lived. He allowed nature to work in its own way, and superintended the process. He did not take life at any one point and describe what he saw, but let life go on and described the stages of existence.

In order to see how worms change the surface of the earth he watched the ways of worms for forty years. He was always doing something with his worms - weighing their secretions, trying how they liked a candle or a piano. How pigeons varied under crossing, how plants climbed, what insects fertilized, what plants fed on extraneous substances and how they did it, were only a few of the suggestive experiments which Mr. Darwin made by the agency of very slow and minute watching."

The Pall Mall Gazette says - His friends will feel the loss of one of the most admirable characters in the whole list of great intellectual figures. There is but one voice, among those who know and are competent to speak, as to his simplicity, his benevolence, his unalloyed disinterestedness, his homely modesty. Four or five years ago one of the two most powerful statesmen in the country was taken to call upon him on Sunday afternoon. Mr. Darwin accompanied his visitor to the gate, and, with cheerful complacency, watched his departing figure through the fields. "It is a wonderful honour to me," he said in his hearty and bright way to one of the younger of the company, "to have a visit from such a great man," just as a little curate might have said. Yet Sir Isaac Newton was a more important man for the world than Sir Robert Walpole, and Locke than Somers. When we think of the impulse which Darwin's speculation has given to thought, not only in natural science, but over the whole field of thought, in philosophy, in literature, and even in connection with the activities of politics, we see that, as far as contemporaries can judge, Darwin deserves nothing less than to rank with those lofty names.

The Standard, from which we have already quoted says - Mr. Darwin, soon after his return from his first and only voyage, married his cousin, and has since then led one of the happiest of domestic lives, Rarely mingling in general society, he lived for science, his friends, and his family. Of his sons, three are more or less distinguished in science. One is an officer of Engineers, another was a high wrangler in Cambridge, and a third practises medicine, and was his coadjutor in his father's last work. Mr. Darwin's work habits were to retire to bed at ten and rise at five. His recreations were his garden, and a steady course of novel reading aloud by Mrs. Darwin, or social intercourse with his younger friends, who, like Sir John Lubbock looked up to him with the affection of the pupils of the old Greek philosophers to their masters. In politics he took no active part, though he felt an eager interest in every public event, and was understood to be sincere Liberal of the advanced school. On his seventieth birthday he received an affectionate address from all classes of his admirers, and to-day the tidings that he has died, full of years and honours, will elicit a very widespread expression of sorrow.

The Daily News says - Up to ten or twelve years ago his tall figure, seated upon a favourite old black cob, was a

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familiar object in the lanes round about; but the unfortunate animal, seized with a fit one day, fell, and died by the roadside, after which it was observed that Mr. Darwin was never seen to ride again. His invariable hours for walking every day were seven in the morning, noon-day, and four o'clock in the afternoon, sometimes accompanied by his sons, one of whom, Mr. Francis Darwin, has long been established as a surgeon in the village, but more often alone. Rising always at the early hour of six to take his cold bath - into which he was accustomed to plunge both morning and evening - he breakfasted alone; and after his first morning walk was in his library as a rule at eight. At nine, when the post-boy arrived from Farnborough, he would spend a little time in the dining room opening letters and skimming the papers, and in the evening would linger an hour or so in the society of his family, or of some of those friends distinguished in the world of science, who occasionally found their way to Downe Court; but the greater part of his time was spent in his library, his gardens, and the outlying parts of his little domain. When he extended his walks into the country round about, it was observed that he was rarely seen in the village or met on the roads, preferring, as he did, to take his way generally southward by the footpaths through the woods and meadows. Little children, who have a quick instinct for a kind and gentle nature, would run to open a gate when they saw Mr. Darwin coming, encouraged thereto by a smile and a kind word. Downe folk, by whom he was much beloved, like now to dwell upon these trifles, and to speak of his considerate kindness to all about him. They point with a sort of pride to the fact that the domestics at Downe Court are mostly old servants; that his maid Margaret Evans, who assisted in nursing him in his last illness, entered his service when a girl, at Shrewsbury, nearly forty years ago, her aunt and uncle being butler and housekeeper to Mr. Darwin's father, Dr. Robert Waring Darwin, in that town.

The remains of Mr. Darwin were interred on Wednesday in Westminster Abbey.