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Science has had a very valuable and remarkable contribution from a very able and accomplished philosopher, Mr. Charles Darwin, in his volume on "The Origin of Species by the Process of Natural Selection" – a book which is sure to excite as much attention and as much abuse as "The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" did some years ago. Mr. Darwin's name, as a naturalist, is well known, from his voyage in the *Beagle*, and his various and valuable literary works. He has been a patient student of nature for many years, has noted and observed the endless varieties of animal life in various portions of the globe, and has come to a conclusion which is not perhaps new, but which is most calmly argued and most learnedly sustained.

Believing, like the author of the "Vestiges," (whoever he may be,) that the teachings of science must be accepted by every honest mind, and that the discovery of a universal law by which all subsequent effects have been produced, is just as compatible with the belief of a supreme Creator, and even more so than the belief in special and continued creations, Mr. Darwin boldly announces his theory, and gives the facts on which it is based. The theory is very simple, but the evidence supporting it (even in this volume, which is only an introduction) is weighty and important, and necessarily voluminous.

Amplifying the old theory of Lamarck, which may be simply illustrated by the example that the web-foot of aquatic birds was supposed to be produced by the constant action of the water gradually expanding the [illeg] of the claws till they finally approached each other and adhered, Mr. Darwin takes an analogous position in what he calls his "principle of natural selection," or in other words, the gradual development of powers and their transmission to the next generation. All organic beings are known to vary, slightly it may be, but still perceptibly; and when this variation, originates perhaps by the circumstances in which the animal is placed, enabling it the better to hold its position and obtain its food, it is generally transmitted to its offspring, and thus slow and gradual advances may be made.

This principle is practically recognised by every keeper of poultry and every breeder of stock, and if found to any extent in the domestication of animals, and in the limited period of individual or historic life, Mr. Darwin claims to extend its operation, and by its simple means to account for the infinite variety of species now abounding in the world.

To do this he has of course, to enter on a very elaborate enquiry, to cite countless cases and examples illustrating his theory, which however, will scarcely be denied, except in its extended form, as accounting for all the phenomens [sic] of animal life. Not only does Mr. Darwin state and support his case, but with the true calmness and candour of a philosopher

he anticipate the objections which may be brought against it, and fully and fairly examines every argument likely to be used.

To grant objection that his theory requires countless ages for its development of species to their present numbers and perfection, and that the geologic strata show distinct and well-defined classes, Mr. Darwin gives a very elaborate reply, which we cannot attempt to abridge. He takes also the objections of all other classes likely to be made, and if he does not succeed in convincing every opponent of his startling theory, he will certainly demand their admiration for his learning and research, his calm and temperate tone. He does not even shun the extremest results of his theory, and admits that he is prepared to believe that all animal life may have originated from a few, or even a single pair, and that even instinct if we understand him correctly, may gradually have arisen to reason. The theory is certainly startling, but it has certain undoubted facts as its basis, and is not the product of a polemic's mind, but the deliberate and well-considered conviction of a very eminent, scientific man, who has the boldness to acknowledge his belief, however, "dangerous" it may be deemed, and so defend it in an earnest, vigorous, and yet temperate style.