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NOTE: *The origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: Murray. 6th ed. F391.

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A sixth edition of Mr Darwin's "Origin of Species" (2) has just been published. The general character and object of the work are so widely known that no special notice of them is necessary here.

All Mr Darwin's theories, and many of his statements of fact, have been called into question; but there is abundant evidence that, though objected to and argued against his book is read. Indeed, there would not be much worth saying for the spirit of scientific inquiry if this were not the case. It is far more easy to object than to disprove, and many of Mr Darwin's theories stand in the position of being objected to without being disproved. It should be borne in mind, too, that such a work, traversing, as it does, a vast field, and dealing with a great number of subjects. moral, material, scientific, and otherwise, is peculiarly open to attack. It has a hundred critics to one upholder. Each department furnishes material for objections by one person or another, and it is quite possible, under such circumstances, that there may be now and then flaws discovered. Indeed, Mr Darwin practically admits that this is the case; for he has made many additions and corrections in this edition, just as he altered and corrected several things in the third, fourth, and fifth editions. The book is in itself an illustration of the development theory. It is already more than it was at first. Then it was described as an abstract only of the theory which had gradually forced itself upon Mr Darwin's mind. Now it is becoming less an abstract than it ever was.

New pieces are added here, and changes are made there. Chapters are remodelled, and a great advance is made towards a more perfect classification of the materials of the book. A new chapter (vii) is added, in which Mr Darwin discusses many of the objections which have been urged to his theory. His manner is well enough known; it is nowhere better exhibited than in this chapter, where he is almost wholly controversial. He says no hard things about any one, calls nobody stupid, commits no person to eternal punishment; but he argues simply and forcibly, and puts forward forcibly the reasons for the conclusions to which he has arrived, and the facts which, as he conceives, negative the objections taken by his critics. It might be very well if in this matter he had more imitators among those who profess to show that he is wrong.

It is not necessary to endorse all that for which Mr Darwin contends, to see that many of his opponents are in error. For instance, nothing has been and is more common in the discussion of his theory than to take some statement or suggestion made in the book, and having shown it to be either inaccurate or doubtful, to jump at once to the conclusion that all the statements and the theory dependent upon them are inaccurate and worse than doubtful. That is not the manner in which the subject should be dealt with. No one is competent to express an opinion on the theory who has not examined it minutely in all its parts in a strictly scientific spirit. It is based upon scientific inquiry, most laboriously and minutely conducted, and it cannot be disposed of with a sneer, or put down by a hard work. In the form in which the book is now presented, it should be very generally read. It is well got up in a single compact volume and must be easy of access to most people. That being the case, it

may be well if, before theory is generally denounced, it should be generally understood. There are many parts in it that seem to us open to serious question; but there is undoubtedly very much that cannot easily be controverted. Altogether, it is the most remarkable contribution to scientific inquiry in these days.

(2) *The origin of species by means of natural selection*, By Charles Darwin, M.A., F.R.S., &c. London: John Murray.