

THE EFFECTS OF CROSS AND SELF-FERTILIZATION IN THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM. By Charles Darwin, M. A., F. R. S., etc. New York: Appleton & Co. Sacramento: A. S. Hopkins.

We have here another volume of the minute and laborious researches of the great naturalist whose life is devoted to the demonstration of the doctrine of Evolution. The main object of Mr. Darwin in these experiments is to throw new light upon the difficult subject of hybridism, which has hitherto presented some of the most obstinate perplexities, and has been one of the most formidable barriers to the progress of the great principle of evolution. Among the results at which he arrives is the fact that cross-fertilization is generally beneficial, and self-fertilization injurious. This, as will be seen at once, is an important truth, for it tallies with our experience of the higher organisms, and tends to demonstrate the uniformity of those natural laws which we suppose to be the best established. The whole of the experiments, however, tend to support the already famous hypothesis that nature works towards the improvement of all creatures through the differentiation of species, and that throughout her operations she rewards, as we may say, the race-benefiting art of cross-fertilization, and punishes, in the same sense, the individual-benefiting art of self-fertilization. The subject is extremely interesting, and though Mr. Darwin, with characteristic modesty, intimates that he does not expect the public to read more than the opening and closing chapters, a faithful perusal of the whole work will repay all who may have the courage to essay it.