

Biographical literature appears this week in an unusual volume. In the February number, 1879, of a well-known German scientific journal, "Kosmos" Dr. Ernst Krause published a sketch of the life of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the not unknown grandfather of his famous grandson, Charles. This article appears under the title of a "Contribution to the history of the Descent Theory," and it is a translation of this work, together with matter drawn from materials furnished by a collection of Erasmus Darwin's letters, which constitutes the present volume.

Darwin had no mean capacity as a poet and scientist, but his greatest claim to distinction is the undeniable fact that he was the first who proposed and consistently carried out a well rounded theory with regard to the development of the living world. His system was in itself a most significant first step in the path of knowledge which his grandson has opened up for us. In all things he was an advanced thinker, and the story of his life is an interesting and welcome addition to the mass of biographical pamphlets.