

2nd Revise

THE LIFE

OF

ERASMUS DARWIN.

By CHARLES DARWIN.

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO AN

ESSAY ON HIS SCIENTIFIC WORKS.

By ERNST KRAUSE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY W. S. DALLAS.

PORTRAIT AND WOODCUTS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1887.

THE

REVISED

BY CHARLES DARWIN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

HENRY OSBORN

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PREFACE.

IN the February number, 1879, of a well-known German scientific journal, 'Kosmos,' Dr. Ernst Krause published a sketch of the life of Erasmus Darwin, the author of the 'Zoonomia,' 'Botanic Garden,' and other works. This article bears the title of a 'Contribution to the history of the Descent-Theory;' and Dr. Krause has kindly allowed my brother Erasmus and myself to have a translation made of it for publication in this country.*

As I have private materials for adding to the knowledge of Erasmus Darwin's character I have written a preliminary notice. These materials consist of a large collection of letters written by him; of his common-place book in

* Mr. Dallas has undertaken the translation, and his scientific reputation, together with his knowledge of German, is a guarantee for its accuracy.

folio, in the possession of his grandson Reginald Darwin; of some notes made shortly after his death, by my father, Dr. Robert Darwin, together with what little I can clearly remember that my father said about him; also some statements by his daughter, Violetta Darwin, afterwards Mrs. Tertius Galton, written down at the time by her daughters; and various short published notices. To these must be added the 'Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin,' by Miss Seward, which appeared in 1804; and a lecture by Dr. Dowson on "Erasmus Darwin, Philosopher, Poet, and Physician," published in 1861, which contains many useful references and remarks.*

* Since the publication of Dr. Krause's article, Mr. Butler's work, 'Evolution, Old and New, 1879,' has appeared, and this includes an account of Dr. Darwin's life, compiled from the two books just mentioned, and of his views on evolution.

[Mr. Darwin accidentally omitted to mention that Dr. Krause revised, and made certain additions to, his Essay before it was translated. Among these additions is an allusion to Mr. Butler's book, 'Evolution, Old and New.']

[*First Edition, Nov. 1879.*]

NOTICE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE present differs in no important respect from the first edition. The title-page has altered, a footnote has been added to the preface and a table of contents to the biographical part of the book has been appended. A few points require correction.

Since the publication of the first edition some further knowledge of the Darwin family has been gained through the researches of the American genealogist Colonel Chester.* Mr. Darwin's papers show that he intended to erase the first five lines on page 1 and replace them by the following passage:—

“Erasmus Darwin was descended from a family of yeomen who lived for several generations on their own land, apparently of con-

* Further researches in the same subject are now being made by Mr. H. F. Burke, Somerset Herald, and by Dr. Howard. The results will appear in a forthcoming part of *Miscellanea Genealogica*.

Dr Howard's

siderable extent, at Marton in Lincolnshire. The great-grandson of the first Darwin of whom we know anything, seems to have been a loyal man, for in his will made in 1584 he bequeathed 3s. 4*d.* 'towards the settinge up of the Queene's Majesties armes over the quearie (choir) door in the parishe Church of Marton.' His son William, born about 1575, possessed a small estate at Cleatham, at no great distance from Marton. He considered himself a gentleman, bore arms and married a lady." It was this William who served James I. as told in the 1st Edition.

P. 2. Erasmus Earle (from whom Erasmus Darwin probably derived his Christian name) should have been described as of Heydon Hall in Norfolk, and as representing Norwich in the Long Parliament.

The allusion to William Alvey Darwin (p. 5.) is misleading: it should have added that he was the ancestor of the elder branch of the family, the present possessors of Elston Hall.

At p. 85 it is said that Dr. R. W. Darwin received no pecuniary assistance beyond £20 from his father and a like sum from his uncle.

It appears however from papers in the possession of Mr. Reginald Darwin that he got £1000 under his mother's settlement, and £400 from his aunt Susannah Darwin.

At p. 106 some account is given of Erasmus Darwin's contributions to medicine. To these an interesting addition may now be made on the authority of Dr. Norman Moore. It appears that some progress towards the discovery of the relation of albuminuria to dropsy had been made before the time of Bright. Van Helmont and Cotunnus knew something of the matter, and Erasmus Darwin in quoting Cotunnus adds his own observations on "mucilaginous diabetes" in a case of what was clearly anasarca due to renal disease. These observations are mentioned as being of importance by Dr. John Blackall who in 1795 observed in the wards of St. Bartholomew's Hospital a case of dropsy associated with albuminuria, and who showed in 1813 that in a certain type of dropsy, albuminuria is present. Finally about 1827 Bright showed how renal disease was the cause of albuminuria, and thus completed a valuable advance in medical knowledge. Erasmus Darwin's share in the

evolution of our knowledge on this subject was not large, but it seems that he was on the verge of showing that his "mucilaginous diabetes" was what is now known as albuminuria.

The epitaph in Breadsall Church is given at p. 127. A similar inscription has been recently placed in Lichfield Cathedral.

ERASMUS DARWIN, M.D., F.R.S.

Physician, Philosopher, and Poet,

Author of the 'Zoonomia,' 'Botanic Garden,' and other works.

A skilful observer of Nature,

Vivid in imagination, indefatigable in research,

Original and far-sighted in his views.

His speculations were mainly directed to problems

Which were afterwards more successfully solved by his

Grandson

CHARLES DARWIN,

An inheritor of many of his characteristics.

He was born A.D. 1731. He resided in the city of Lichfield from A.D. 1756 to A.D. 1781. He died A.D. 1802, and was buried at Breadsall, Derbyshire.

His first wife MARY, daughter of CHARLES HOWARD, lies buried in the Close.

These lines are inscribed beneath a bust erected by ~~Mr Francis Galton~~ in memory of his grandfather.

F. D.

October, 1887.

Erasmus Darwin by his grandson,
Mr Francis Darwin Galton

Erasmus Darwin

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ERRATA.

- Page 24, line 14, for "wilt," read "will."
 " 29, " 24, for "Bolton," read "Boulton."
 " 34, " 23, for "benevolent," read "benevolence."
 " 79, " 14, for "younger," read "eldest."
 " 87, " 10, for "1849," read "1848."
 " 127, " 5, for "10th," read "18th."
 " 174, " 17, for "the rough-haired," read "as the rough-
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