

**ESSAYS ON  
PHYSIOLOGICAL  
SUBJECTS**

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Essays on Physiological Subjects by Gilbert W. Child

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**GILBERT W. CHILD**

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BY  
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## PREFACE.

THE following Essays, with the exception of the last, were contributed anonymously to various Periodicals, during the years 1862—1864.

It has long been my intention to republish several papers so contributed, in a separate form, because they deal with subjects which, though by no means unimportant in themselves, at least in a theoretical point of view, have not received much attention from English physiologists.

I am now induced by special circumstances so far to anticipate my intention as to reprint, somewhat hastily, the few which follow, and which are concerned with questions affecting vegetable no less than animal physiology.

OXFORD, *Jan.*, 1868.

### NOTICE.

THIS Volume was printed for private circulation early in the present year. The publication has been delayed in part by accidental circumstances, and partly also with the intention of adding to it some further Essays on kindred subjects. Since, however, the questions with which it deals have formed the subject of much recent controversy, it is thought advisable to allow it to appear at once.

Oct. 1868.

G. W. C.



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## ESSAY I.

### REVIEW OF MR. DARWIN'S WORK ON THE FERTILIZATION OF ORCHIDS\*.

WE owe the appearance of this very interesting work, as the author informs us on the first page, to the demand which has been made for facts in proof of the proposition laid down in the 'Origin of Species,' that 'in no organic beings can self-fertilization go on for perpetuity.' (Ch. iv. p. 101.) It requires, therefore, to be examined from two points of view; firstly, as an account in a popular form of the reproductive system of a remarkable class of plants; secondly, in regard to the support which it affords to the above proposition, itself only a collateral branch of the author's great argument for the development of species. We have spoken of this work as giving a popular account of the fertilization of orchids, but we desire especially to avoid the

\* 'On the various Contrivances by which Orchids are fertilized by Insects, and on the good effects of Intercrossing.' By Charles Darwin, M. A., F. R. S., &c. John Murray.