

**CHARLES DARWIN
AND THE THEORY OF
NATURAL SELECTION**

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Charles Darwin and the theory of natural selection by Edward B. Poulton

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EDWARD B. POULTON

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AND THE THEORY OF
NATURAL SELECTION**

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THE CENTURY SCIENCE SERIES

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CHARLES DARWIN
AND THE
THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION

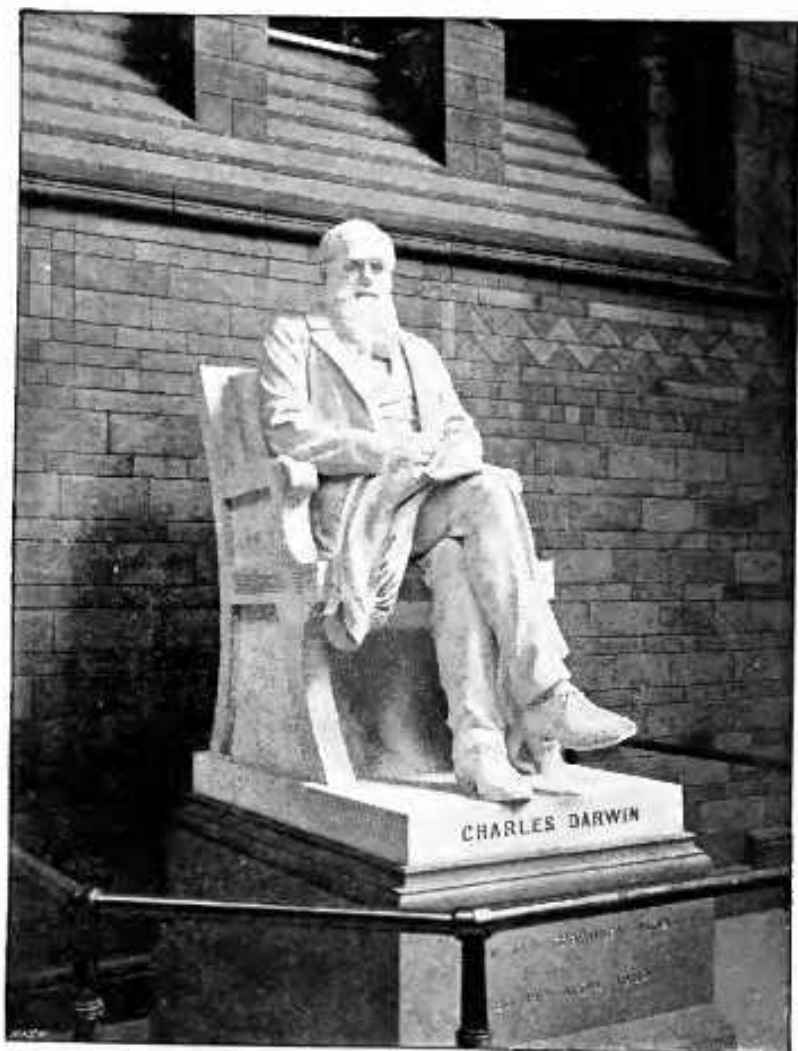



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STATUE OF CHARLES DARWIN.

(By Boehm.)

CENTRAL HALL OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.



THE CENTURY SCIENCE SERIES

CHARLES DARWIN

AND THE

THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION

BY

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INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages I have tried to express a sense of the greatness of my subject by simplicity and directness of statement. The limits of the work necessarily prevented any detailed treatment, the subject of the work prevented originality. We have had the great "Life and Letters" with us for nine years, and this I have used as a mine, extracting what I believed to be the statements of chief importance for the work in hand, and grouping them so as to present what I hope is a connected account of Darwin's life, when considered in relation to his marvellous work, and especially to the great central discovery of Natural Selection and its exposition in the "Origin of Species."

In addition to the invaluable volumes which we owe to the industry, taste, and skill of Francis Darwin, an immense number of other works have been consulted. We live in an age of writing, and of speeches and addresses; and the many sides of Darwin's life and work have again and again inspired the ablest men of our time to write and speak their best—a justification for the freedom with which quotations are spread over the following pages.

It is my pleasant duty to express my hearty thanks to many kind friends who have helped in the production of this little work. Mr. Francis Darwin has kindly permitted the use of many of Darwin's letters, which have not as yet been published, and he has given me valuable information and criticism on many points. I have also gained much by discussion and correspondence with my friends Dr. A. R. Wallace, Professor E. Ray Lankester, and Professor Meldola. The latter has freely given me the use of his valuable series of letters; and I owe to my friend, Mr. Rowland H. Wedgwood, the opportunity of publishing a single letter of very great interest.

The greater part of the volume formed the subject of two short courses of lectures delivered in the Hope Department of the Oxford University Museum in Michaelmas Term 1894 and Lent Term 1895.

EDWARD B. POULTON.

Oxford, *October*, 1896.

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