

**THE CATEGORIES AN APPENDIX
FURTHER: DARWIN AND
EMERSON, WITH TWO NOTES
- THE EGO, AND CAUSALITY**

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The Categories an appendix further: Darwin and Emerson, with two notes - the ego, and causality by James Hutchison Stirling

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JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

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AN APPENDIX FURTHER

DARWIN AND EMERSON

WITH TWO NOTES—THE EGO, AND
CAUSALITY

BY

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THE CATEGORIES

AN APPENDIX FURTHER

I.—DARWIN AND EMERSON

"I HAVE found," says Mr Darwin, "the most extraordinary difficulty in making able men understand at what I was driving. . . . They have convinced me that I must be a very bad explainer. . . . Neither of them (Lyell, Hooker) really understands what I mean by natural selection; I am inclined to give up the attempt as hopeless. I am beginning to despair of ever making the majority understand my notions. Both Hooker and Lyell use expressions to which I demur."

Mr Darwin, then, saw a peculiarity in his doctrine that he got nobody to understand; and it was in fact the luck of this misunderstanding that, existent from the first with the "majority," simply *made* him. This peculiarity, namely, *connected* with both, is, in point of fact, rightly neither—neither natural selection nor yet evolution. It turns wholly and solely on Design; and this it was that—by the "majority"—as unseen, was not understood. Mr Darwin, that is, has made it plain to himself that what has been

regarded as Design is no such thing, but only the aimless, purposeless result of mere random, haphazard, outside, literal accident. I mean that he does not only assert and affirm this as the actual fact to his mind, but that, beyond all possibility of doubt, he thinks that he demonstratively proves it, too.

What, to wit, through all the ages has been regarded as the Design of God, the Design of the Universe, Mr Darwin insists—emphatically insists—most emphatically insists—on *replacing*—replacing by a *Proxy*, a Proxy of his own: “No more Design,” he cries, “than in the course which the wind blows!”

Surely this is a most interesting point to see into; as we know, indeed—or shall know, if we will look close enough—this, namely, that evolution, natural selection, the entire doctrine, more than just “connected” with it, wholly, solely, and individually, depends upon it. Surely it is *the* point, crucially and critically *the* point.

This *the* point, then—how does he (Darwin) come to it, and what *is* it?

He turns his eye on “millions of generations,” and “cannot doubt” that “individuals of a species,” even by simple “accident,” will be born in them “with some variation profitable to some part of their economy.” “An organic being like the woodpecker, or the mistletoe, may *thus*”—*thus*, he feels sure¹—“come to be adapted to a score of contingencies.”

¹ See pp. 232-4 of *Darwinianism*.

That—*adaptation of means to ends, contrivance, purpose, intention*—each, under whatever name, obvious, manifest, palpable, glaringly existent—that, all that is what we name Design, and the truth of it is—the *Proxy*, the Darwin's Proxy of accident, mere accident—proxy and nothing else!

At page 112 of the book (the *Categories*) will be found a number of Mr Darwin's illustrations. They are these: seal, bat, flying-fish, bird with longer beak, elephant with inclining tusks, British insect with exotic plant, the bear that feeds itself to a whale in the water. Besides these, there are a few others, but of great interest, as the woodpecker, the tree-frog, the mistletoe, tillandsia, etc. With the bulk of them, indeed, I have, more or less, already dealt, as in the little book itself, or in *Darwinianism*, say.

If, then, I shall now, in representation of the rest, signalise only one illustration, that one shall be, surely in its exceptionally constant repetition, Mr Darwin's own special favourite. And that favourite will, I doubt not, at once suggest itself to every reader as the "bird with a beak $\frac{1}{15}$ th of an inch longer than usual."

The supposition is peculiar, and not quite such as to prove a likely one to everybody, perhaps; but, without wish to make difficulties, we may accept it just as it comes. During "millions of generations,"¹ then, a bird—which, no doubt, has already met, in

¹ *Life*, ii. 124.