TWELVE GREAT MODERNISTS

LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

BOOKS BY

LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

Impressions of Theodore Roosevelt

Letters of Archie Butt

Twelve Great Modernists

TWELVE GREAT MODERNISTS

HERODOTUS
ST. FRANCIS
ERASMUS
VOLTAIRE
THOMAS JEFFERSON
JOHN MARSHALL
FRANÇOIS MILLET
GEORGE STEPHENSON
BEETHOVEN
EMERSON
DARWIN
PASTEUR

By
LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1927

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

TO

W. B. A.

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF
HER SYMPATHETIC HELP WITH-
OUT WHICH THIS BOOK COULD
NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Praescriptum	ix
I: Herodotus, the Traveller . . .	1
II: St. Francis of Assisi, the Worldling	29
III: Erasmus, the Emancipator . . .	47
IV: Voltaire, the Humanitarian . . .	69
V: Thomas Jefferson, the Aristocrat .	95
VI: John Marshall, the Democrat . .	127
VII: Beethoven, the Poet	151
VIII: George Stephenson, the Philosopher	171
IX: Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Humourist	195
X: Charles R. Darwin, the Saint . .	225
XI: Jean François Millet, the Naturalist	255
XII: Louis Pasteur, the Philanthropist .	275
Postscriptum	300

PRAESCRIPTUM

Those readers who may expect theological controversy in these pages will be disappointed. The word modernist is not used here in its current and technical ecclesiastical sense. I have taken the liberty of giving this often acrimoniously discussed word a broader meaning—or rather, I have gone back to the original meaning found in its Latin root, *modus* or manner. When we say that a man is a modernist we ought to be referring to his mode or manner of thinking and not to his theories or creeds. This, at least, is the sense in which the title of this book is chosen.

The modernist believes in life, in progress, in spiritual and intellectual evolution, rather than in tradition and dogma; in the republic of reason rather than the despotism of creeds. He refuses to live in the past, although he gladly gets light from the past to illuminate and make clearer the path toward the future. The conflict between the traditionalist (or, to use the jargon of the day, the fundamentalist) and the modernist is not a new thing, nor is it confined to theology.

It is as old as recorded literature and is found in the domains of law, art, poetry, music, history, pedagogy, and science, as will appear, I hope, in the biographical sketches that compose this volume.

These sketches are not the fruit of original research. They make no pretense to scholarship. In writing them no original documents have been consulted and no lost manuscripts have been discovered. Their purpose is merely to pass on, if possible, to the general reader like myself some of the pleasure which the reading of biography has given me for now nearly fifty years.

Not having the talent, patience, or application of the scientific student I like to take my history in biographical doses. Biography—good biography, that is—has the entertaining qualities of fiction, the encyclopedic qualities of political history, and the inspiring qualities of devotional literature. "From the records of men whose passage through life has been marked by rays of shining light," said Pasteur, "let us piously preserve every word and deed, no matter how slight, that may reveal the sources of their inspiration for the education of posterity." He might well have added for our own education as well.

The notion of attempting such a book as is here offered was put into my mind some fifteen years ago by reading Andrew D. White's *Seven Great Statesmen*, a model work of its kind, readable and rereadable. I cannot and do not hope to compare my sketches to his profound yet lively studies. That would be presumptuous, for Dr. White was one of the foremost historical scholars of our time. But I plead, in justification of my venture, the dictum of Thomas Carlyle which Dr. White prints as a motto facing his title page: "Great men, taken up in any way, are profitable company."

The men I have elected to take up here have interested me not only because of their achievements, but because of their spirit of courage and progress. All of them were denounced by some of their contemporaries as dangerous radicals and innovators. It is not this, however, that makes them modernists. The true modernist, since he believes in the life of the spirit, has reverence for the great spirits of the past, and, more than all, for that Great Spirit which most of us cannot define but which all of us can see working in the long history of mankind and which has been called so happily by Matthew Arnold "the Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness."

This spirit of reverence for the true, the beautiful, and the good appears in striking form in most of the dozen modernists who have especially interested me; I think it may be discovered in all of them—even in Herodotus and Voltaire.

LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT.

CORNWALL, NEW YORK
October 1st, 1926

HERODOTUS

THE TRAVELLER

TEN: CHARLES R. DARWIN

THE SAINT

BORN 1809—DIED 1882

GAMALIEL BRADFORD, the American biographer, has recently published an essay which he entitles "Darwin the Destroyer" and which he closes with these sorrowful words: "It was Darwin who at least typified the rigorous logic that wrecked the universe for me and for millions of others."

If Gamaliel Bradford's conception of the universe was that of the ancient Hebrews—a geocentric machine operated by an anthropomorphic God—then there is cause for his lament. I cannot share it, although I suppose I was brought up in as pure an atmosphere of New England orthodoxy as he was. It may be admitted that Darwin is the destroyer of the geocentric-anthropomorphic theology. But I regard him as a saint, for he has substituted for a ghastly mechanism a universe which is illimitable in its truth, beauty, and mystery; and truth, beauty, and mystery are the attributes of the highest form of religion.

Far from being a rank materialist Darwin seems to me to have been something of a mystic. The deeper he penetrated into the secrets of nature, the greater the mystery became. In his sixty-fifth year he wrote to a Dutch student·

> I may say that the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe, with our conscious selves, arose through chance, seems to me the chief argument for the existence of God; but whether this is an argument of real value, I have never been able to decide. . . . The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man's intellect; *but man can do his duty.*

The italics are mine. I underscore the words because they are the key to his perhaps sombre but surely saintlike spirit. The note of sadness that occasionally sounds in his private letters and conversation is due to his loss of the comfortable gnosticism or know-it-allness which was characteristic of the University where he had been educated, of the circles of friends and relations that was dear to him, of the Church whose splendid ritual he had so often repeated, and of the very government under which he lived as a loyal citizen. He said more than once that he had no wish or intent to destroy any other man's faith, but as for himself he must pursue the truth wherever it led him. It required the

spirit of a saint to follow this course, without apology or self-defense, in spite of the abuse, denunciation, and slander that were dashed upon his gentle head. Happily for those who loved him, he had a champion in his devoted friend Huxley who delighted to do battle for him and who did not shrink from hitting even a bishop's head occasionally with as beautifully handled and intellectual shillalah as was ever swung in a debate.

The *Origin of Species*, the work in which Darwin first announced his doctrine of evolution, was published late in 1859. In June, 1860, a famous meeting at Oxford of the British Association was the arena for a pitched battle over Darwin's new theory quite as exciting and vehement as the recent contest at Dayton, Tennessee, in which the late Mr. Bryan was the most prominent gladiator. About the only difference is that at Oxford the contestants were either educated scientists or University men while at Dayton the stage was occupied largely by ignoramuses. Bishop Wilberforce, who was popularly known because of his specious rhetorical eloquence as "Soapy Sam," was the Bryan of the occasion. He proceeded to "smash Darwin," and Huxley in turn smashed him. The story is fully told in the biography of Huxley by

his son Leonard. The excitement was intense. "One lady," said an observer, "fainted and had to be carried out; I, for one, jumped out of my seat." The fundamentalists and the modernists were egged on by the cheers of their partisans. In the peroration of his attack, the Bishop is said by the Rev. Dean Freemantle to have spoken as follows:

> "I should like to ask Professor Huxley who is sitting by me, and is about to tear me to pieces when I have sat down, as to his belief in being descended from an ape. Is it on his grandfather's or his grandmother's side that the ape ancestry comes in?" And then taking a graver tone, he asserted, in solemn peroration, that Darwin's views were contrary to the revelation of God in the Scriptures.

Darwin was not present but Huxley was called upon to reply. Turning to a friend before he rose he said *sotto voce*, "The Lord hath delivered into mine hands." Dean Freemantle reports him as beginning:

> I am here only in the interest of science and I have not heard anything which can prejudice the case of my august client.

After completely exposing the Bishop's scientific incompetency, Huxley continued, according to John Richard Green, then an Oxford

undergraduate but later the distinguished English historian:

> I asserted—and I repeat—that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling it would rather be a man—a man of restless and versatile intellect—who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice.

Intellectual England was torn asunder by this debate, but gradually the operations of quiet reason prevailed and the principle of evolutionary progress in the processes of nature was accepted both in Church and University. This happened more than half a century before the furor in Tennessee. It only shows how far behind we are in the procession. Huxley's attachment to Darwin was based not merely on scientific sympathy but on admiration for his essential goodness. Three weeks after Darwin's death Huxley wrote to a friend who was common to them both:

> "Colossal" does not seem to me to be the right epithet for Darwin's intellect. He had a clear, rapid intelligence, a great memory, a vivid imagination, and what made his

greatness was the strict subordination of all these to his love of truth.

And in September of the year of the Oxford meeting, a letter from Huxley to his friend Charles Kingsley, protesting against the "hard names" of atheist and infidel which were applied to Darwin and himself, contains these phrases:

The ledger of the Almighty is strictly kept, and every-one of us has the balance of his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence. . . . And thus, my dear Kingsley, you will understand what my position is. I may be quite wrong, and in that case I know I shall have to pay the penalty for being wrong. But I can only say with Luther, "*Gott helfe mir, ich kann nichts anders.*" . . . One thing people shall not call me with justice and that is—a liar.

Darwin's life conforms to the definition of the religious spirit once made by that other scientific saint, President Charles W. Eliot, who said that the distinctive fruits of religion are "love, reverence, and duty." One may go even further and believe that Darwin displayed the real spirit of the Christian religion if we accept Dr. Eliot's interpretation:

What then is the renewed Christianity which these terrible times we are living in cry out for in the midst of tears and heartbreaking sorrows? It is a Christianity which abandons the errors and the unjust, cruel conceptions

which the centuries have piled up on the simple teachings of Jesus. It is a Christianity which sympathizes with and supports the aspirations of mankind for freedom—freedom in thought, speech and action—and completely abandons authoritative ecclesiasticism and governmental despotism.

It is a Christianity which hallows and consecrates birth, marriage, the bringing up of children, family life, the earning of a livelihood, . . . and rejects all the aspersions on the natural life of man which Christianity inherited from paganism and Judaism.

It is a Christianity which will be the friend and ally of all that is good and ennobling in literature, science and art, and will avail itself without fear of all the new means of teaching and helping men which successive generations shall discover, and of all the innocent enjoyments and social pleasures, while resisting effectively every unwholesome or degrading influence on human society.

It is a Christianity which will recognize that the pursuit of happiness in this world is legitimate for every human being, and that the main function of government is to protect and further men in that pursuit by securing to the community health, education, wholesome productive labour and liberty.

I make no attempt to appraise or interpret the doctrine of evolution. The origin of man, if not the origin of species is still a physical and metaphysical mystery. But no thinking person now questions the biological fact that in nature there is a law of development from a lower to a higher order. Darwin, if not the first to suspect the existence of this law, was the first to investigate it deliberately and state it scien-

tifically. It is not this, however, that impels me to include him in the company gathered together in this volume. His personal qualities, his methods of work, and his attitude toward life are what have enlisted my interest and admiration.

The year 1809 might be marked with red on the calendar, for it was the birth year of three great modernists—Lincoln, Gladstone, and Darwin. Darwin came from a family of intellectuals. His great-great-great-grandfather was a barrister and loyalist in the time of Oliver Cromwell; his great-grandfather, also a barrister, was a man of property who lived a life of leisure ameliorated by dabblings in amateur science; his paternal grandfather was a physician by education, a botanist by inclination, and a poet by main strength; his maternal grandfather was the famous English ceramist, Josiah Wedgwood; his father was a highly respected physician with a very large practice, an uncanny gift for diagnosis, and was so good a judge of investments that he left his children a comfortable fortune. Darwin often referred to his father as "the wisest man I ever knew" and said of him in his reminiscences:

> My father's mind was not scientific, and he did not try to generalize his knowledge under general laws; yet he

formed a theory for almost everything which occurred. I do not think I gained much from him intellectually, but his example ought to have been of much moral service to all his children. One of his golden rules (a hard one to follow) was, "Never become the friend of anyone whom you cannot respect."

What were some of the moral qualities which he derived from his father and what were some of his standards of respect for others is disclosed in a naïve and engaging fashion in his private letters and journals. In them may be discovered his generous appreciation of others, his sense of humour, his modest estimate of his own ability, and his capacity for the tenderest family affection. Describing Robert Brown, a famous botanist of his day, he alludes to the fact that this Scotch curator of the botanical section of the British Museum was "strangely jealous" of the discoveries of other scientists and reluctant to reveal to them his own. However, Darwin adds:

He was capable of the most generous actions. When old, much out of health, and quite unfit for any exertion, he daily visited (as Hooker told me) an old manservant who lived at a distance (and whom he supported), and read aloud to him. This is enough to make up for any degree of scientific penuriousness or jealousy.

A fine tribute to the soundness of the cup-of-cold-water test of essential goodness!

For a ruthless destroyer, Darwin had a delightful sense of humour. He reports that once, at an evening party, he met Buckle, whose *History of Civilization* went up like a rocket and came down like a stick. Buckle talked so incessantly that he, Darwin, hardly attempted to say a word. Buckle afterward said in the presence of Darwin's brother, "Well, Mr. Darwin's books are much better than his conversation." Stanhope the historian, better known as Lord Mahon, was a friend of Darwin. Through him Darwin met his somewhat eccentric father, "the old Earl," who took a fancy to the budding young scientist and turning to him one day said, "Why don't you give up your fiddle-faddle of geology and zoology, and turn to the occult sciences?" Young Stanhope was somewhat shocked at his father's brusqueness, but Darwin and the historian's "charming wife" were much amused. Darwin knew Macaulay and Carlyle. Macaulay he liked and says, contrary to contemporary opinion, that "he did not talk at all too much"; Carlyle was antipathetic to him partly because Carlyle once said to him that his friend Grote's history was "a fetid quagmire, with nothing spiritual about it," and partly because Carlyle's mind was "so ill-adapted for scientific research." Darwin admits that Carlyle

was "all-powerful in impressing some grand moral truths on the mind of man," but he found that "his views about slavery were revolting," that "in his eyes might was right," and that "his mind seemed to me a very narrow one." He tells an amusing incident about Carlyle and the mathematician Babbage:

> The last man whom I will mention is Carlyle, seen by me several times at my brother's house, and two or three at my own house. His talk was very racy and interesting, just like his writing, but he sometimes went on too long on the same subject. I remember a funny dinner at my brother's, where, amongst a few others, were Babbage and Lyell [the great geologist], both of whom liked to talk. Carlyle, however, silenced everyone by haranguing during the whole dinner on the advantages of silence. After dinner Babbage, in his grimmest manner, thanked Carlyle for his very interesting lecture on silence.

One incident will suffice to reveal Darwin's beautiful tenderness. His daughter Annie, a child of ten years, died. Within a few days of her death he wrote down these impressions of her:

> I write these few pages, as I think in after years, if we live, the impressions now put down will recall more vividly her chief characteristics. From whatever point I look back at her, the main feature in her disposition which at once rises before me, is her buoyant joyousness, tempered by two other characteristics, namely, her sensitiveness, which might easily have been overlooked by a stranger,

and her strong affection. Her joyousness and animal spirits radiated from her whole countenance, and rendered every movement elastic and full of vigour. It was delightful and cheerful to behold her. Her dear face now rises before me, as she used sometimes to come running downstairs with a stolen pinch of snuff for me, her whole form radiant with the pleasure of giving pleasure. . . . She would at almost any time spend half an hour in arranging my hair, "making it," as she called it, "beautiful," or in smoothing, the poor dear darling, my collar or cuffs—in short, fondling me.

She was in her manners remarkably cordial, frank, open, straightforward, natural, and without any shade of reserve. Her whole mind was pure and transparent. One felt one knew her thoroughly and could trust her. I always thought, that come what might, we should have had in our old age at least one loving soul which nothing could have changed. . . . In her last short illness her conduct in simple truth was angelic. She never once complained; never became fretful; was ever considerate of others, and was thankful in the most gentle, pathetic manner for everything done for her. When so exhausted that she could hardly speak, she praised everything that was given her, and said some tea "was beautifully good." When I gave her some water she said, "I quite thank you"; and these, I believe, were the last precious words ever addressed by her dear lips to me.

We have lost the joy of our household, and the solace of our old age. She must have known how we loved her. Oh, that she could now know how deeply, how tenderly, we do still and shall ever love her dear joyous face! Blessings on her!

A prayer for the dead from the destroyer of religion!

The futility of some phases of the old-fashioned classical education is patent in Darwin's case. From school he was sent to Edinburgh University, his father's idea being to make a doctor of him. Here he got some insight into geology and zoology but discovered that medicine did not appeal to him. This was perhaps because, as he said in later life, the lectures on materia medica and anatomy were so "incredibly dull" as to be "fearful to remember." Drawing and dissection, which would have been of inestimable value to him in his life career, were neglected by his teachers or advisers; so were French and German. These four essentials he had to pick up as well as he could by himself in his adult years. As he appeared to be a misfit at Edinburgh, it was decided to prepare him for the Church, a plan into which he entered dutifully if not enthusiastically, so he went to Cambridge. Of this period of his life he says with a touch of humour:

> Considering how fiercely I have been attacked by the orthodox, it seems ludicrous that I once intended to be a clergyman. Nor was this intention and my father's wish ever formally given up, but died a natural death when, on leaving Cambridge, I joined the *Beagle* as a naturalist. If the phrenologists are to be trusted, I was well fitted in one respect to be a clergyman. A few years ago the secretaries of a German psychological society asked me ear-

nestly by letter for a photograph of myself; and some time afterwards I received the proceedings of one of the meetings, in which it seemed that the shape of my head had been the subject of a public discussion, and one of the speakers declared that I had the bump of reverence developed enough for ten priests.

What really happened to change his choice of a career was, that his instinctive interest in science swamped his interest in theology. He spent his spare time in collecting beetles. "No pursuit at Cambridge," he says, "was followed with nearly so much eagerness or gave me so much pleasure." Although in his old age he looked back to his three years at Cambridge as "wasted," so far as intellectual progress was concerned, his life there was normal and happy and he probably got a good deal more out of it than he realized. He had warm friends, was a member of a popular dinner club and was devoted to snipe and grouse shooting. This latter sport he gave up while still an undergraduate for a characteristic reason.

Before he left Cambridge [said a college friend in some recollections of Darwin], he told me that he had made up his mind not to shoot any more; that he had had two days' shooting at his friend's, Mr. Owen of Woodhouse; and that on the second day, when going over some of the ground that they had beaten the day before, he picked up a bird not quite dead, but lingering from a shot it had received

the previous day; and that it had made and left such a painful impression on his mind, that he could not reconcile it to his conscience to continue to derive pleasure from a sport which inflicted such cruel suffering.

The same friend continues:

I cannot end this cursory and rambling sketch without testifying, and I doubt not all his surviving college friends would concur with me, that he was the most genial, warm hearted, generous and affectionate of friends; that his sympathies were with all that was good and true; and that he had a cordial hatred for everything false, or vile, or cruel, or mean, or dishonourable. He was not only great, but preëminently good, and just, and lovable.

Curiously enough, while at Cambridge, Darwin frequented a musical set and used to time his walks so as to hear on weekdays the anthem in King's College Chapel. I once heard the anthem sung in that incomparable building by the men's choir without the accompaniment of the organ, which had temporarily broken down, and I can easily appreciate the profound impression which that superb music must have made on Darwin. I allude to Darwin's early taste for music as being curious because, late in life, he deplored the fact that it had become wholly atrophied from disuse. He seems, however, to have overlooked the fact that his early familiarity with music had its influence in his investigations of

the origin of species. In a letter which he wrote to the German naturalist, Fritz Müller, during the controversies in the scientific as well as the religious world about his theories, he said:

> I have often reflected with surprise on the diversity of means for producing music with insects, and still more with birds. We thus get a high idea of the importance of song in the animal kingdom.

That this importance was a mystery to him not to be explained merely by the laws of biology and heredity, he intimates in another letter to the English psychologist Edmund Gurney:

> I never supposed that the different degrees and kinds of pleasure derived from different music could be explained by the musical powers of our semi-human progenitors. Does not the fact that different people belonging to the same civilized nation are very differently affected by the same music, almost show that these diversities of taste and pleasure have been acquired during their individual lives? [That is to say, there are qualities of the *ego* which cannot be explained by physical science.] Your simile of architecture seems to me particularly good; for in this case the appreciation must be almost individual, though possibly the sense of sublimity excited by a grand cathedral may have some connection with the vague feelings of terror and superstition in our savage ancestors, when they entered a great cavern or gloomy forest. I wish someone could analyze the feeling of sublimity.

Darwin valued the æsthetic side of man's nature and deplored what he supposed was his

own deficiency in this respect. I quote the following rather long passage from the private journal written for his children because it gives his opinion of the importance of the relation of art to science and reveals his own genuine humility:

Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry: I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music. Music generally sets me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure. I retain some taste for fine scenery, but it does not cause me the exquisite delight which it formerly did. On the other hand, novels which are works of the imagination, though not of a very high order, have been for years a wonderful relief and pleasure to me, and I often bless all novelists. A surprising number have been read aloud to me, and I like all if moderately good, and if they do not end unhappily—against which a law ought to be passed. A novel, according to my taste, does not come into the first class unless it contains some person whom one can thoroughly love, and if a pretty women all the better. [The modern Main Street school of novelists will please take notice!]

This curious and lamentable loss of the higher æsthetic tastes is all the odder as books on history, biographies,

and travels (independent of any scientific facts they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized or better constituted than mine, would not, I suppose, have thus suffered; and if I had my life to live again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.

This scientific reference to the emotional side of man's nature is hardly a fair measure of the part which the emotions played in Darwin's life. Underneath his calm and equable exterior some very deep feelings seethed although he kept them under control. He was a contemporary of John Bright and Gladstone, but I cannot find any record in his letters of special interest in the political reforms—the abolition of the Corn Laws and the extension of the franchise, for example—which tore England asunder during his young manhood and made world figures of Bright and Gladstone. He did, however, align himself with John Bright on the question of slavery, which he had learned to detest during his visit

on the *Beagle* to Brazil just after he left Cambridge. G. M. Trevelyan, in his life of John Bright, notes the fact that Darwin and Huxley supported the committee, in which John Bright was a leader, organized for the prosecution of the notorious Governor Eyre whose cruel treatment of the Negroes in the island of Jamaica had roused the better sentiment of England. Carlyle ranged himself on the other side as a supporter of imperial authority, thus confirming Darwin's early judgment, already noted, that he was an upholder of the doctrine that might makes right. How deeply the feelings of England were stirred at this time, especially the feelings of the common people, appears in an incident related by Trevelyan:

> More than a generation after the Corn Laws had been repealed, a great Liberal meeting was advertised in Manchester with Lord Hartington in the chair, and Bright as chief speaker. Before the proceedings began, a gentleman in the audience found himself sitting behind three old workingmen who had walked in from a neighbouring county to hear John Bright speak once more, because they had often heard him in the Corn Law days. When they saw him come on to the platform they all three broke down and burst into tears.

Darwin shared in the emotional experience through which England then passed. While

he did not burst into tears he did, in private, burst into passionate language more than once that suggests the moral fury of an Old Testament prophet. At the outbreak of our Civil War, he wrote to Asa Gray, the distinguished botanist at Harvard:

> I never knew the newspapers so profoundly interesting. North America does not do England justice; I have not seen nor heard of a soul who is not with the North. Some few, and I am one of them, even wish to God, though at the loss of millions of lives, that the North would proclaim a crusade against slavery. In the long run, a million horrid deaths would be amply repaid in the cause of humanity. What wonderful times we live in! Massachusetts seems to show noble enthusiasm. Great God! how I should like to see the greatest curse on earth—slavery—abolished. Farewell.

Darwin undoubtedly overemphasized the atrophy of his emotions and underestimated his æsthetic tastes, for his son says that, up to the end of his life, he greatly enjoyed parts of Beethoven's symphonies and showed discrimination in his appreciation of the style of different musical performers. A year before his death, Hans Richter, the celebrated German orchestral conductor, paid a visit to Darwin at his home, "Down House," in the county of Kent, and Richter's playing on the piano aroused Darwin to unwonted enthusiasm.

Of Darwin's scientific achievements and career it is not necessary to speak here. The record in outline may be found in any good encyclopædia. He began it by enlisting at the age of twenty-two as naturalist on the famous voyage of the *Beagle*, whose five-year voyage in the waters of South America, the South Sea Islands, and Australasia, laid the basis for his epoch-making contribution, *The Origin of Species*, to the sciences of zoology, botany, entomology, and anthropology. Not only that, his hypotheses and demonstrations, founded upon the most meticulous study and observation, changed the whole current of modern thought in history, philosophy, and theology. His scientific hypotheses may be superseded, but his influence on the human mind can never be eradicated. The sources of this influence he has himself endeavoured to analyze. The analysis is characterized by his habitual simplicity, modesty, and search for the truth:

> I have no great quickness of apprehension or wit, which is so remarkable in some clever men, for instance, Huxley. I am therefore a poor critic: a paper or book, when first read, generally excites my admiration and it is only after considerable reflection that I perceive the weak points. My power to follow a long and purely abstract train of thought is very limited; and therefore I could never have succeeded with metaphysics or mathematics. . . .
>
> Some of my critics have said, "Oh, he is a good observer,

but he has no power of reasoning!" I do not think this can be true, for the *Origin of Species* is one long argument from the beginning to the end, and it has convinced not a few able men. No one could have written it without having some power of reasoning. I have a fair share of invention, and of common sense or judgment, such as every fairly successful lawyer or doctor must have, but not, I believe, in any higher degree.

On the favourable side of the balance, I think that I am superior in noticing things which easily escape attention, and in observing them carefully. My industry has been nearly as great as it could have been in the observation and collection of facts. What is far more important, my love of natural science has been steady and ardent.

This pure love has, however, been much aided by the ambition to be esteemed by my fellow naturalists. From my early youth I have had the strongest desire to understand or explain whatever I observed—that is, to group all facts under some general laws. These causes combined have given me the patience to reflect or ponder for any number of years over any unexplained problem. As far as I can judge, I am not apt to follow blindly the lead of other men. I have steadily endeavoured to keep my mind free so as to give up any hypothesis, however much beloved (and I cannot resist forming one on every subject), as soon as facts are shown to be opposed to it. . . .

My habits are methodical, and this has been of not a little use for my particular line of work. Lastly, I have had ample leisure from not having to earn my own bread. Even ill-health, though it has annihilated several years of my life, has saved me from the distractions of society and amusement.

Therefore my success as a man of science, whatever this has amounted to, has been determined, as far as I can judge, by complex and diversified mental qualities and

conditions. Of these, the most important have been—the love of science—unbounded patience in long reflecting over any subject—industry in observing and collecting facts—and a fair share of invention as well as of common sense. With such moderate abilities as I possess, it is truly surprising that I should have influenced to a considerable extent the belief of scientific men on some important points.

One of the most striking tributes to Darwin's elemental goodness comes from an unexpected source which has not yet, I think, found its way into permanent literature. About three years ago there was a movement to purchase Darwin's home, "Down House," as a permanent memorial. At that time I found in the New York *Evening Post* a remarkable letter in behalf of the movement written from Cambridge, England, and signed A. J. Skinner. It reads partly as follows:

I was born and lived within sight of Down House, Darwin's old home. . . . Some of my boyhood years were spent in the service of Charles Darwin, my father being at the same time a coachman in his employ.

Before me as I write is a picture of Down House with its creeper-clad walls, the old-fashioned veranda set about with comfortable chairs, the smooth, velvety lawn with the old sundial and flower beds, and the ancient mulberry tree, whose fruit when ripe was eagerly contended for by a host of noisy blackbirds, thrushes and others of the feathered tribes. I do not, however, require the aid of a photo-

graph to bring back a memory picture of Down House as I knew it, for the old mansion, the gardens and orchard, the paddocks and the long leafy walk, known as the sand-walk, leading to a little coppice and a summer house, are as familiar to me after nearly fifty years as my present surroundings.

Another picture which also comes easily to mind is that of a tall, striking figure in Inverness cape and black, wide-brimmed, soft felt hat, striding along well-kept paths, followed by his inseparable companion, a white fox terrier, which, wandering neither to left nor right, trots steadily a length or so behind his master's heels. We whose duty it was to keep the paths and flower beds free from weeds and rubbish always knew the time of day when we saw the master of Down House approaching, for with him punctuality was a virtue, and the daily walk at the same hour each day was noted by us as an indication of what was expected of those who served him. But although Charles Darwin required punctuality and other virtues in those about him, no employer was more beloved and affectionately regarded, for just dealing and consideration were as much a part of his great nature as was his penetrating scientific mind.

Two little incidents from my own experience may serve to illustrate this fact. I was cutting the lawn one day and at one end of it I spied a queer looking apparatus with metal rods driven through the turf a foot or more into the ground. Being of a curious nature, I couldn't resist pulling up one of the rods to see what it was all about. While examining it I became aware of the presence of someone near, and stealing a guilty glance behind, I was almost paralyzed to see the "master," as we called him, standing over me.

I felt a great relief when I saw a kindly smile and heard a kindly voice saying: "Are you studying earthworms too,

my little man? Be careful to put the rod back where it came from."

On another occasion, in the afternoon of a midsummer day, when most of the village lads of my age were playing at cricket or other games, I was weeding one of the main walks. On my knees, hot and irritated, grumbling audibly and stabbing viciously at the weeds, I again became aware of a sympathetic voice saying, "I am sure you find that trying work to-day; finish it some other time," and the first half-crown of my own I ever possessed was pressed into my hand. So, too, the old gardener who tended the greenhouses, where experiments on plants were carried on and who at times may have unknowingly disturbed carefully adjusted instruments and appliances, could if he were alive testify to the same kindly consideration.

Numerous stories of Charles Darwin's thoughtfulness and kindness to man and beast were current among the villagers round about, and keen regrets and concern were felt in many a village home during the time of his fatal illness. One of the saddest days of my life, and I know others of the village folk shared my emotion, was when I set out to the nearest telegraph office, six miles away, with a bunch of telegrams which gave the news to the world that a great and noble heart had ceased to beat.

The full measure of Darwin's achievements cannot be appreciated without taking into account one phase of his life which is sometimes overlooked—his chronic invalidism. Of this his son gives the following brief but remarkable record:

If the character of my father's working life is to be understood, the conditions of ill-health, under which he

worked, must be constantly borne in mind. He bore his illness with such uncomplaining patience, that even his children can hardly, I believe, realize the extent of his habitual suffering. In their case the difficulty is heightened by the fact that, from the days of their earliest recollections, they saw him in constant ill-health—and saw him, in spite of it, full of pleasure in what pleased them. Thus in later life, their perception of what he endured had to be disentangled from the impression produced in childhood by constant genial kindness under conditions of unrecognized difficulty. No one, indeed, except my mother, knows the full amount of suffering he endured, or the full amount of his wonderful patience. For all the latter years of his life she never left him for a night; and her days were so planned that all his resting hours might be shared with her. She shielded him from every avoidable annoyance, and omitted nothing that might save him trouble, or prevent him becoming overtired, or that might alleviate the many discomforts of his ill-health. I hesitate to speak thus freely of a thing so sacred as the life-long devotion which prompted all this constant and tender care. But it is, I repeat, a principal feature of his life, that for nearly forty years he never knew one day of the health of ordinary men, and that thus his life was one long struggle against the weariness and strain of sickness. And this cannot be told without speaking of the one condition which enabled him to bear the strain and fight out the struggle to the end.

Huxley says, in his *Darwinia*, that this invalidism was the result of an illness contracted in South America, in 1834, during his memorable voyage on the *Beagle*. Thus he was a martyr as well as a saint.

In this journalistic essay there has been no

endeavour to draw an original portrait of Darwin or to give an estimate of his personality from a new point of view. What has been done is to assemble quotations in a convenient form—chiefly from the memorable biography by his son Francis—which let Darwin's associates speak for him and Darwin speak for himself to those younger American readers who have been told that he was an enemy of the peace and happiness of mankind. How that accusation would have troubled him may be surmised from the fact that he once wrote to a friend quoting the phrase "peace on earth, good will to men" and then adding, "which, by the way, I always think the most perfect description of happiness that words can give."

Francis of Assisi never uttered a more saint-like sentiment.