

SCIENCE

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THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY MUTATION.*

FORTY years ago Dárwin's 'Origin of Species' was given to the world. The number of those who witnessed its appearance gradually diminishes year by year. Few are left to remember the condition of things at that period, and the shock which its publication caused. We had grown up firmly convinced of the invariability of species. The precepts and commands of Linnæus reigned supreme over our thoughts and deeds alike. To take the last specimen from a locality, no one would have dared, not even in the seclusion of the forest primeval. 'Far less would any one have had the temerity to give even a single thought to those phenomena whose study he had forbidden. Many an interesting variation did I meet with on my walks when a student, but, obedient disciple that I was, left uncollected.

With the appearance of Darwin's book came the complete overthrow of the old doctrine. What formerly had been the science now became merely its primer. New demands were made upon investigation, interest was now directed into entirely new channels. An endless field was

* Address before the second general meeting of the eighth congress of the 'Nederlandsche Natuur-en Genuskundige Vereeniging,' held at Rotterdam. Translated from the 'Album der Natuur,' Mei, 1901, by H. T. A. Hus, Assistant in Botany, University of Amsterdam, and revised by the author.