

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

DARWIN does not discuss this subject in his great work, "The Origin of Species," but there rather admits the miraculous origin of life. On the last page of that work he says:—"There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, while this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved."

But though this concession—for we must regard it as such—is from Darwin, it is not of the Darwinists. It marks their first point of attack on their opponents. Those who believe that the nature of life requires for it a miraculous origin are by them alternately pitied and abused.

Schmidt declares that, in the above-quoted passage, Darwin has certainly been untrue to himself; and he agrees with Zöllner in saying: "The hypothesis of an act of creation (for the beginning of life) would not be a logical, but a merely arbitrary, limitation of the causal series, against which our intellect rebels by reason of its inherent craving for causality. . . . To hold the beginning of life as an arbitrary act of creation is to break with the whole theory of cognition."

Huxley speaks of a certain "good kind of people" who believe "that vital phenomena, and especially all questions with regard to the origin of vital phenomena, are questions quite apart from the ordinary run of enquiry, and are by their very nature placed out of our reach," and who say "that all these phenomena originated miraculously, or in some way totally different from the ordinary course of nature, and that therefore they conceive it futile, not to say presumptuous, to attempt to enquire into them." (*Origin of Species*.)

He then relates the story of Diogenes and the Sophist who demonstrated to him that all motion is an impossibility, and how Diogenes refuted him by getting up and walking round his tub.