



ERASMUS DARWIN.

FROM A PICTURE BY WRIGHT OF DERBY.

ERASMUS DARWIN.

BY ERNST KRAUSE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY W. S. DALLAS.

WITH A PRELIMINARY NOTICE

BY CHARLES DARWIN.

PORTRAIT AND WOODCUTS.



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PREFACE.



IN the February number, 1879, of a well-known German scientific journal, 'Kosmos,' Dr. Ernst Krause published a sketch of the life of Erasmus Darwin, the author of the 'Zoonomia,' 'Botanic Garden,' and other works. This article bears the title of a 'Contribution to the history of the Descent-Theory;' and Dr. Krause has kindly allowed my brother Erasmus and myself to have a translation made of it for publication in this country.*

As I have private materials for adding to the knowledge of Erasmus Darwin's character, I have written a preliminary notice. These materials consist of a large collection of letters written by him; of his common-place book in folio, in the possession of his grandson Reginald Darwin; of some notes made shortly

* Mr. Dallas has undertaken the translation, and his scientific reputation, together with his knowledge of German, is a guarantee for its accuracy.

after his death, by my father, Dr. Robert Darwin, together with what little I can clearly remember that my father said about him; also some statements by his daughter, Violetta Darwin, afterwards Mrs. Tertius Galton, written down at the time by her daughters; and various short published notices. To these must be added the 'Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin,' by Miss Seward, which appeared in 1804; and a lecture by Dr. Dowson on "Erasmus Darwin, Philosopher, Poet, and Physician," published in 1861, which contains many useful references and remarks.*

* Since the publication of Dr. Krause's article, Mr. Butler's work, 'Evolution, Old and New, 1879,' has appeared, and this includes an account of Dr. Darwin's life, compiled from the two books just mentioned, and of his views on evolution.