



Darwin's century - Lorin Eisley.

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Darwin's Century - Loren Eiseley

✓ Discovery - "We saw as a sign we were nearing America some great birds like crows, but white with long tails." - Abraham Kendall, 1594
The tiny marine diatoms whose skeletons made Dover's chalk cliffs.
the cirri from Cambrian times lives because of its grip - never got washed ashore.

flower animal, the sea urchin

Linnaeus reported: "Dr. John Mitchel is returned from Virginia, where he has been closely occupied for 6 years in collecting plants; but he was plundered in his voyage home by Spanish pirates, to the great misfortune of Botany."

Linnaeus was Whitman-like - love of the great variety of life.

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Linnaeus: "The plants remain and renew their flowers" premonition as he worked - "fate is always against great things" Linnaeus, ~~XXXXXX~~ lost his mind in later years - the stroke → ~~XXXXXX~~ even the memory of his own name.

LN - title: Natural History

Said the son of Buffon on the scaffold in the Terror (Fr. Rev.): "Citizens, my name is Buffon" (father very respected, scientist...) eternal imperfection and change

✓ Emily: "It was the end of an age. Buffon like Linnaeus had had a world reputation, had had his specimens passed graciously through warring fleets, had corresponded with Franklin, had been one of the leading figures in a great country at the height of its intellectual powers."

✓ Darwin - on the Voyage - aboard the Beagle or in the desert air of the Andean uplands - "the whole of my pleasure was derived from what passed in my mind." Five years in the great solitudes. "There is no finer evidence of Darwin's many-sided abilities as an observer than his geological work among the Andes."

today's radioactive methods of checking time in the rocks

microcosm - man macrocosm - universe

the human stock

✓ Wallace: "man has been changing almost wholly in the head" (while standing quite still otherwise)
man in his last, his intellectual phase
"Life can only be understood backward but it must be lived forward" - Kierkegaard

✓ Eiseley: "In the course of three centuries ... ideas evolve, erode, and change."

early Christianity viewed the human condition as one destined inevitably to worsen.

time cyclic or historic

Ernest Haeckel: "The gist of Darwin's theory is the simple idea: that the Struggle for Existence in Nature evolves new Species without design just as the Will of Man produces new Varieties in Cultivation with design." All notion of preconceived Platonic ideal forms has vanished from this system."

Eisely "Our heads, modern man has learned, may contain weird and irrational shadows out of the subhuman past - shadows that under stress can sometimes elongate and fall darkly across the threshold of our rational lives."

Haeckel in 1877 - "the cell consists of matter called protoplasm, composed chiefly of carbon, with an admixture of hydrogen, ~~nitrogen~~ and sulphur. These component parts, properly united, produce the soul and body of the animated world, and suitably nursed, become man. With this single argument the mystery of the universe is explained, the Deity annulled and a new era of infinite knowledge ushered in."

Darwin at 28: "If we choose to let conjecture run wild, then animals, our fellow brethren in pain, disease, suffering and famine - our slaves in the most laborious works, our companions in our amusements - they may partake of our origin in one common ancestor - we may be all melted together."