

CHARLES' SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

DARWIN'S ORIGINAL NOTE—Reprinted below is a page from *Charles Darwin's letter in which he conjectured as to the possible origin of living creatures. That conjecture was about as far as he took the process, for nowhere in his *Origin of the Species* is the origin of the species discussed or even hinted at.

(The last part of the "translation," below contains blanks because the present writer does not have a copy of it in English, and *Darwin's scribbles are somewhat difficult to decipher. The spelling and punctuation of these quizzical notes were revised when *Francis Darwin later placed in print an edited version of his father's writings.)

"But if (and oh! what a big if!) we could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light, heat, electricity, etc., present, that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes . . ."—*Charles Darwin, in *Francis Darwin (ed.), *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* (1887 ed.), p. 202.

The most amazing part of all is that such a large part of 20th century scientific endeavor has been focused on an intense, almost desperate, —and quite fruitless—effort to prove true the ramblings of this 19th century British eccentric who spent his time either nursing his digestive problems or wondering how life might possibly have evolved.

can have been present.— But if	can ^{have} been present. ~ But if
(& oh what a big if) we	(& oh what a big if) we
could conceive in some warm	could conceive in some warm
little pond with all sorts of	little pond with all sorts of
ammonia and phosphoric salts,—	ammonia & phosphoric salts,—
light, heat, electricity etc. present	light, heat, electricity etc. present
that a protein compound	that a protein compound
was chemically formed, ready	was chemically formed, ready
to undergo still more	to undergo still more
complex changes, at the	complex changes, at the
present day _____	present day. such another
_____ and be instantly _____.	could be instantly reversed,
a _____, which _____ it have been	a ^{reversible} stable ^{state} which could ^{could} have been
the case before living	the case before living
creatures were formed!—	creatures were formed!—